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year of his age*

Nailed to the deck – p41

Survey ship rescues refugees from sinking fishing vessel

HUNDREDS SAVED BY SILICONE JOB

SAILORS from veteran survey ship HMS Beagle saved the lives of hundreds of hysterical refugees when their overcrowded boat broke down and started to sink in stormy Mediterranean seas.

Beagle, a coastal survey vessel which was on her way home to Devonport after her final deployment, responded to a midnight Mayday call from the leaky refugee ship, crammed with 240 people, drifting with no engines in force eight winds 30 miles south of Crete.

The overcrowded 40-metre vessel, which the refugees said had sailed from Turkey and was heading for Italy, was wallowing beam-on to the high seas and leaking in several places.

A boarding team of three – Lt Cdr Mike O'Sullivan, POM George Hawksby and MEM John Burgess – from Beagle took the ship's sea-boat to climb aboard the refugee vessel, the Aypin Captain, a risky venture in itself.

Party leader Lt Cdr O'Sullivan, the Executive Officer (XO) of HMS Beagle, said: "The transfer across on to the vessel was hairy, to say the least – the swell was around four metres.

"They were big seas for a sea-boat, and just launching and recovering it was extremely difficult. Our blokes did a very good job there.

"It was certainly too risky to try putting civilians into boats.

"The refugee boat looked a bit like a rig support vessel or fishing boat, with a flat deck aft and a wheelhouse forward. It must have

been about 500 tons. It was floundering, beam on to the sea, force eight, taking on water from a split seam.

"When we arrived it was mayhem. It was the middle of the night. Everyone was screaming. Even the people on board didn't speak the same language – it was a very mixed bag of people.

"It was just a matter of calming them down, letting them know they would be fine. There were about 40 women and quite a lot of children – about 33, with the youngest a babe in arms of about 2½ months.

"A couple of people spoke fairly broken English – but they didn't necessarily speak the same language as whoever else was on board. There must have been at least four or five groups of nationalities on board.

"And I think the fact that the crew had abandoned them was playing heavily on their minds."

The captain and crew were nowhere to be seen, having either taken a boat and made a run for it when trouble struck, or hiding

● Turn to page 3



● HMS Beagle on survey work in the Middle East.
Inset: the refugee ship Aypin Captain.

■ **THUNDERER SPEAKS OUT – RADIO CHALLENGE FOR RN ENGINEERS, p29**

Tri-Service charity gets royal boon

SSAFA FORCES Help will have cause for double celebrations at the Queen's Golden Jubilee this year. The national military charity has been chosen as one of the five good causes to receive donations from this anniversary celebration. But 2002 is also the 50th year that the Queen has been SSAFA's Patron.

Enquirers have been contacting Buckingham Palace for months to ask about presenting gifts to the Queen to mark her 50 years as monarch.

The Queen has made a decision to discourage personal gifts, considering the Jubilee an opportunity for her to thank the country for the support during her reign.

All callers will be told that a donation in support of five nominated charities would be appropriate.

This donation can either go directly to a specific charity, or become part of a fund which will be split equally among the five.

In addition to SSAFA Forces Help, the four other charities are Barnardo's, CRUSE Bereavement Care, ICAN and the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution.

SSAFA Forces Help describes itself as honoured to be chosen to benefit from this year's Golden Jubilee celebration.

SSAFA, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association, is the national military charity that helps both current and retired Service men, women and their families.

Over 100,000 people are helped each year by a network of more than 7,000 trained volunteers, 500 in-Service volunteers and over 400 professionals.

Support services include welfare, financial support, social work, health care, housing, family support, and even that most basic need, friendship.

SSAFA Forces Help can be reached on 020 7403 8783.

Sick Berth medal presented to HMS Nottingham medic

HMS NOTTINGHAM'S 'doc', POMA Daz Hemmings, has been presented with the Sick Berth Attendant of the Year medal by the Medical Director General, Surgeon Rear Admiral Ian Jenkins.

The title is awarded annually to a Medical Assistant "for zeal and efficiency in discharge of duties over the preceding year".

Daz was recognised for the fine work that he has put in since HMS Nottingham came out of refit.

The medal itself is struck by the Royal Mint. It shows a picture of a Medical Assistant at work, with the recipient's name inscribed around the outside edge.

Daz's abilities have also gained him selection for the Chief's course to become a CPOMA.

Pompey crew seek help for Southsea steamer

THE FERRY ship MV Southsea's finest moment was taking part in the 1953 Coronation Fleet Review.

As the grand procession led by the Trinity House vessel, Patricia, trailed through the harbour, behind the warships, in the wake of the great liners, MV Southsea and her sister ship, Brading, carried the Admiralty Staff.

Now, after a long life as a Portsmouth-Ryde Isle of Wight ferry, the MV Southsea has ended her days in Newport, South Wales.

The MV Southsea Society with a Bristol company are hoping to bring this 'pocket liner' home.

This vessel is the last of the Isle of Wight ferries that can be preserved from the classic period.

But significant help is needed. The Southsea has narrowly escaped the scrapyard on a number of occasions. Her condition is reasonable, but she does need a lot of external work.

If you could help, contact: MV Southsea Society, 39 Ranelagh Road, Portsmouth PO2 8EZ.

MEDIA STAR RECOGNITION FOR DEVONPORT TYPE 23

HMS Argyll boosts Navy's image at home and abroad



DEVONPORT frigate HMS Argyll has won a prestigious award for raising the public profile of the ship and the Royal Navy.

HMS Argyll, a Type 23 frigate, won the Desmond Wettern Award, chiefly through its efforts in the tricky surroundings of Sierra Leone.

The frigate was deemed to have succeeded in generating positive coverage for the Senior Service, despite the shifting political and military scenario in the troubled West African state.

Argyll deployed for a seven-month stint in May 2000, and the close relationship fostered between the frigate and the local community was reflected in the excellent media coverage of the humanitarian effort provided by her sailors.

Another highlight which swayed judges was the ship being given the Freedom of Argyll and Bute, and despite her returning to a bread-and-butter routine back in the UK, Argyll continued to maintain a high profile through Internet links and close ties with affiliates and charities.

The Desmond Wettern Award is presented annually to a ship, squadron or unit, and is named in honour of journalist and writer Desmond Wettern, who was for many years the naval correspondent on the *Daily Telegraph*. The award was first presented in 1993.

Tulips from Holland to Devonport

HUNDREDS of tulip bulbs arrived at Devonport naval base from the Royal Netherlands Navy.

The traditional gift of Dutch tulips began in 1946 as a tribute to the "hospitality, friendship and wonderful sportsmanlike spirit of the Royal Navy which has been an inspiration."

This year's bloom of 470 bulbs was delivered to Plymouth by the Dutch ship HNLMS Bloys van Treslong when she came to Devonport for training with the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation.



● POMA Daz Hemmings.

● HMS Argyll patrolling off Sierra Leone, West Africa.

Picture: John Skillen

Guardian of silent service's history

COMMANDER Richard Compton-Hall MBE, a former RN Submarine Museum director, has died aged 72.

He joined the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth in 1943. He served in HMS London in the Far East from 1947 to 1948.

His long association with submarines began in 1949. His first command was the X-craft HMS Minnow in 1956, followed by HMS Springer.

After a two-year exchange visit to the US Navy's submarine base, New London, he returned to the UK in 1961 to command HMS Grampus.

He was awarded the MBE in 1964 for operations in command of Grampus, a boat which he took under the Arctic icecap.

After leaving the Navy, he became director of the RN Submarine Museum in 1975 until he retired in 1994.

He wrote extensively on the submarine service, including the recent *Navy News* centenary supplements on the Silent Service, until ill health prevented further work.



Satellite viewing



● Capt Steve Kirby accepts HMS Cornwall's new satellite TV system from CWEM(R) Kevin Homewood, the equipment maintainer, with other members of the Weapon Engineering dept.

CHRISTMAS on board HMS Cornwall was made that bit more bearable for the ship's company by the arrival of a brand new satellite TV system.

The Type 22 frigate is still away from home on Operation Veritas, which includes the Navy's operations east of Suez.

She was due to be home to Plymouth before Christmas, but plans were changed - although she should make it home for Easter!

The brand new stabilised satellite system was fitted while the ship was alongside in Mombasa, Kenya, in December.

From start to end the project took less than three weeks, and now the ship's company can watch their favourite satellite programmes at sea around the world.

A Permanent Joint Headquarters operational welfare grant bought the kit, and jointly DLO and FOSF fitted the system.

STRUCK LUCKY

LORRAINE ('Luton Airport') Chase touches Survey Recorder Chris Jordan's collar for luck on the Royal Navy stand at the Boat Show at Earls Court. Other visitors to the stand included the Princess Royal and the First Sea Lord – see page 4.

Picture: PO(PHOT) Graham Meggit



Refugees 'think of our Armed Forces as the good guys'

● From page one

amongst the refugees, though no one saw them.

"The refugees knew who we were – I must admit it was a bit like 'Don't worry, the Royal Navy's here!'"

"The moment they knew that we were British, from the Royal Navy, it gave them a bit of confidence. They think of our Armed Forces as the good guys."

Beagle had sent an advance maintenance party ahead of her for the passage, so the ship's company on the night was only 33, some 30 per cent below strength, which is why only three could be spared for the boarding party.

Having calmed the frightened refugees, the rescuers' attention was turned to the boat itself.

"With the engine it was just a case of trying everything to get it going," said Lt Cdr O'Sullivan.

"Because we couldn't find the captain or crew, even locating the starter was difficult."

MEM Burgess went down to the engine room to see what could be done.

"I had a little play with the engines, and with the XO working the throttles on the bridge we managed to start them," he said.

There were no steering motors available, as the servo mecha-

nism had failed. So Lt Cdr O'Sullivan ended up steering the ship by hand for up to eight hours, struggling to keep her head into the seas.

But the Navy trio's resourcefulness was needed again when a group of refugees alerted them to a leak – and the damage control training which sailors undergo passed the test with flying colours.

"I went below to check and found a split in the hull and water coming in," said MEM Burgess.

"I noticed some silicone gel, some rags and some grease and used a hammer to carry out an emergency repair job. It was really a case of having to improvise."

His XO said MEM Burgess had done a "fantastic job" with the leak, adding that he was in no doubt that had Beagle not arrived on the scene, the refugee boat would have foundered with heavy loss of life. Although there were merchantmen standing by, they could not have assisted because of the conditions, and it was not until just before dawn that more help arrived in the shape of the Spanish frigate Extremadura and the Dutch fast combat support ship HNLMS

Amsterdam.

"When the Amsterdam arrived we managed to get about 33 people off in about six hours by helicopter – and remember that the Dutch are very good at this sort of thing, which just shows that they were really operating on the very limit," said Lt Cdr O'Sullivan.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Beagle, Lt Cdr Derek Turner, said: "The boarding team's actions almost certainly helped prevent serious loss of life."

"The whole ship's company performed extremely well in difficult circumstances and in a highly professional manner."

Amsterdam's Sea Hawk helicopters winched off some of the women and children and landed them ashore in Crete. When the weather calmed down, the Alpin Captain, with the remaining refugees, was escorted inshore by a Greek naval vessel.

HMS Beagle, which had been standing by in case of further emergencies, was then released to resume her passage home, having lost a day's rest in Barcelona because of her involvement. She also had to contend with a very rough, uncomfortable passage to the Spanish coast.

The 32-year-old ship has just

completed surveying tasks in the Middle East, and was due to arrive home in Devonport – to be met by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Nigel Essenhigh – as *Navy News* went to press. Beagle is due to decommission this month.

□ HMS Southampton and RFA Diligence came to the aid of 23 people claiming to be Iranian refugees, found drifting in a 20ft boat in choppy waters in the Northern Arabian Sea.

Southampton went alongside to investigate and was told they had set off to seek new lives in Oman, the United Arab Emirates or Pakistan.

But after several days at sea their engine failed. For several more days they claimed to have drifted helplessly with two of their number dying and being buried at sea. By this stage they had run out of food and water.

The crews of Southampton and Diligence provided blankets as well as food and water before helping to get the engine repaired.

The refugees were also offered the chance to board Diligence and be taken to land, but as they were in international waters they preferred to continue their journey.



Winning smiles

WHILE visiting HMS Ocean at Devonport to check on her preparations for re-deployment, the C-in-C Fleet Admiral Sir Alan West presented a cheque for £1,500 to LOM(C) Clarke – latest winner of the RN Sports Lottery.

Picture: LA(PHOT) Angie Pearce

Combined operations

MINEHUNTERS HMS Ramsey, Ledbury and Sandown joined forces to take 120 Combined Cadet Force cadets from all over the country for an exciting day at sea.

Sailing from Portsmouth, they anchored at Spithead to watch a display by a Lynx helicopter from HMS Richmond's flight. The cadets were then involved in a number of exercises and demonstrations, starting with the launch and recovery of a Remotely Controlled Mine Disposal Vehicle.

A surprise fire exercise using special smoke for extra realism was followed by a damage control demonstration.

Senior CCF officer embarked in HMS Ramsey, Lt Cdr Colin Stratton-Brown, RNR from Maidstone Grammar School, expressed his appreciation: "Even if the cadets here don't later join the Navy, they will always remember this day and will still be keen and interested many years from now," he said.

● Cadets on board HMS Ramsey prepare to launch the seaboot.



'One-shop' Website launched

A NEW RN and RM Reference Website has been launched as a 'one-stop shop' for up-to-date information.

www.rnreference.mod.uk will be host to the Families Web pages with links to all the latest news on deployed operations – and other Internet sites of interest including Navy News.

Also to the Naval Manning Agency, Naval Chaplains Service, UK Maritime Trade Operations Web pages and, increasingly, unclassified reference material of general interest usually found on the MOD Intranet.

And to HMS Nelson's Overseas Support Unit and UK Support Unit CINCSOUTH LANT (Lisbon) Web pages, plus links to BDS Washington, Naval Support Unit Naples, Veterans Advice Unit, RN & RM Families Association.

And many, many more.

Bomb disposal man showed 'outstanding courage'

'OUTSTANDING courage' shown by a Royal Marine who disposed of a live mortar shell found on a mountain in St Helena has earned him the Second Sea Lord's Commendation.

WO Neville Weston, a former RM Corps Regimental Sergeant Major, was working as a recruiter on the remote mid-Atlantic island when he answered an SOS call from the civil authorities.

He organised a mission with Army colleague Sgt Richard Sheridan to carry the potentially unstable 70lb bomb down 700 steps of a steep ladder at Jamestown.

The bomb was then taken to the harbour to be loaded onto a boat and dumped in the ocean.

The commendation recognises the "selfless initiative" of WO Weston, whose Commando training at Lympstone came to the fore during his impromptu bomb disposal action on one of the world's remotest islands. He acted "with-

out regard to his own safety and thought only of the greater good."

It was presented to him at a ceremony at Portsmouth Naval Base by the Flag Officer Training and Recruiting, Rear Admiral Peter Davies.

Said WO Weston, now working for the Naval Careers Service in Oxford: "My experiences as a Marine took over instinctively. I was aware that any sudden movement could make the mortar explode and we'd be injured, but public safety was paramount."

Coventry sent off for sale overseas

HMS COVENTRY was decommissioned last month after 14 years' service – but she may see many more under a new flag.

The Type 22 frigate has been taken out of service as part of the re-shaping of the Armed Forces under the Government's Strategic Defence Review – and the MOD's Disposal Services Agency is actively marketing her to overseas governments as an operationally capable warship.

At a ceremony at Devonport, Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral James Rapp inspected the ship's ceremonial guard as Guest of Honour.

Her sponsor, Mrs Anne Bazalgette, and eight previous commanding officers were present, as were many representatives of affiliate organisations – particularly those from the City of Coventry with which the ship and her predecessors have enjoyed a long and active association.

The ship was launched in 1986 and accepted into Naval service in 1988. Since then she has steamed 425,776 miles and has been a frequent visitor to the Middle East and the Adriatic.

Her Battle Honours include the Falklands conflict in 1982 and she has seen service in numerous theatres ranging from the Arabian

Gulf, the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

LOM Sean Crean had the honour of lowering the White Ensign for the last time while one of the longest serving members of the ship's company, CPO Mark Varney, cut the decommissioning cake.

HMS Coventry returned home in November from a highly successful deployment in the West Indies, where she played a key role in the capture of cocaine with a street value of £40million, involving a James Bond-style chase by her Lynx helicopter.

Destroyers club Spring dinner date

ALL current and former Commanding Officers of Royal Navy destroyers automatically become members of the Destroyer Club – a "gregarious dining society" which meets twice a year.

Next dinner will be held at the Naval Club, 38 Hill Street, London on April 17 at 7pm, chairman Admiral Sir Jock Slater presiding.

Price including wine, port and coffee will be £37.

Contact Cdr Simon Kings, DNO AWW, Room 425, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, Whitehall, London WC2N 5BP for details.

Royal visit

THE PRINCESS Royal meets AEM Tracy Lamb at the Royal Navy stand at the Boat Show at Earls Court.

Picture: PO(PHOT) Graham Meggitt



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Letters

JACK

WADDA TATTY LITZIE
VALENTINE CARD

IT'S THE
THOUGHT
THAT
COUNTS!!

ALL THE WAY UP TO
FIVE P!



Sepoy toll was six

WITH regard to Mr A. Cooper's query about HMS Sepoy (December issue), I can add some details.

The tragic incident took place during the morning of Tuesday, April 8 1930 when, together with the destroyers Sirdar, Somme and Thracian, she was exercising in local waters off Hong Kong.

At the after end of the destroyer a depth charge which was being prepared for use exploded and killed an officer and three men outright, and injured three others.

Sepoy returned immediately to harbour and next day, with full military honours, the funerals of the dead men were held.

HMS Hermes provided the band along with a full guard of honour and the procession was led by the C-in-C China Station, Admiral Hill.

He was followed by officers and men from all the military units in Hong Kong, including contingents from US, French, Italian and Portuguese warships.

Soon after being admitted to hospital two of the injured men died from the injuries they received, thus bringing the toll to six. The fatal casualties were Commissioned Torpedo Gunner Mr L. G. Reed, PO W. Belderson, and ABs T. E. Smith, J. N. R. Cooper, W. J. A. Draper and R. W. Heywood.

Mr Cooper's photograph is a poignant record of the Navy of the 1930s and it is interesting to see that all the naval personnel are wearing pith helmets with their tropical white uniforms. — N. McCart, Cheltenham

I SUSPECT my late father was in the funeral party of the men from HMS Sepoy.

He was the junior rating attached to the six men who died and had been sent to get the tea when the explosion happened and so was the only survivor of the party.

I have several photographs of the ceremony at Happy Valley Cemetery, including pictures of the men who were killed.

My father at the time would have been 20 years old. He joined at HMS Ganges in 1926 and served until the end of the 1950s. — Mrs P. Jarman, Clacton-on-Sea.

Lasting legacy written in blood (mine)

THE DATE was July 3, 1953 and my ship, the Fiji-class cruiser HMS Bermuda had sailed from Port Said that morning en route for Malta. On entering harbour we were to dress ship overall.

That afternoon I was given the task of climbing the mainmast to rig the dressing lines. I recall the PO asking me if I was happy about doing the job.

"Yes of course, no problem," I replied — I thought it couldn't be worse than climbing the mast at HMS St Vincent or HMS Bruce, where I did my training as a Boy Seaman.

So, dressed only in a pair of shorts and gym shoes, I got on with the job. Soon I was filthy from the soot from the mast and the acrid smoke from the funnels which made breathing very difficult at times.

After stand easy I was given a ten minute job of putting a top coat of ship's side grey on a small triangular ledge that had been chipped and painted with a primer of red lead. Access to this ledge was by squeezing between

the side of the twin 4in gun mounting and a metal screen that partially surrounded the front. The mounting, which had a wide arc of fire, faced outboard.

I had just started painting when suddenly, under power, the mounting trained forward. The seaman who was maintaining the gun neglected to carry out the laid down procedure by ensuring that no object, human or otherwise, prevented the mounting from turning. He should have shouted 'Stand clear of the mounting, mounting training'.

The 22 ton mounting pushed me sideways and forwards, my right arm and shoulder taking most of the impact. Worst of all, my face and jaw were pushed into the screen where it decreased in height. I heard these bones crunching and cracking and in those moments I believed my death was imminent.

Perhaps my screams were heard, for the mounting stopped suddenly and fortunately I was not trapped and managed to stagger out. A messmate's look of horror told its own story.

He helped me down to the sick bay. It so happened that our surgeon commander was taking passage on an accompanying ship so it fell to the Chief SBAS to render first aid.

I was given an injection of morphine and he did an excellent job of stitching up my face that had been lacerated from my left ear, narrowly missing my jugular vein, around to the other side of my jaw.

Later that evening I briefly regained consciousness to see the Captain and Commander by my bedside. I was aware of the ship's vibration for we were going at full speed. The Captain said 'Don't worry, son — you will soon be in hospital in Malta.'

We arrived there in the early hours of the next morning. In a stretcher I was lifted by crane into a motor boat and taken to Bighi hospital. When I came around I had two steel pins screwed into

my jaw with another fixed across like a section of scaffolding.

During my stay in hospital the Bermuda came into Grand Harbour to embark stores for Rhodes where an earthquake had recently occurred.

I took the opportunity to go aboard to thank the Chief SBAS and to visit the scene of my accident. On reaching the 4in gun deck I found the four mountings had warning notices painted with red letters on a white background saying DANGER AREA KEEP CLEAR.

Consequently, as a direct result of my accident, all ships have these notices on all moveable armaments — so I believe I can claim to have made my mark on the Navy, albeit in blood! — W. R. Jay, Paignton, Devon.

● HMS Bermuda at Zante, Greece, 1953



George's Ball pinched by Barfleur

READING the article about the Ancient Mariner, George Parker, reminded me of the time in the Med, during the Suez Crisis, when he was serving in HMS St Kitts.

I was in her sister ship, the Barfleur, and one night, coming back on board, we had to cross over the St Kitts.

Maybe it was down to one too many of Maltese amtoot or just sheer devilment, but George's Ball, as it was commonly called, was in its usual place halfway up the mast above the buffer's locker, just waiting to be nicked.

Somehow it was in our hands and quietly smuggled aboard the Barfleur and hidden behind the heads door in the Captain's sea cabin.

At 6am, was it all the 4.5s firing a broadside? No, it was just George sounding off: "Mount-batten will hear about this! I've got permission to fly the Ball in harbour!"

I believe Anthony Eden was alerted and questions asked in the House to the point that the Suez Crisis might be called off and all the ships returned to Guzz. To save all this, George's Ball was returned to the mast 24 hours later. — R. Hamilton-Cox, Somerset Legion House, Weston-super-Mare.

I WAS a baby sub lieutenant in HMS St Kitts 45 years ago and George Parker was the Buffer's Yeoman — a much more influential figure on board.

He was actually, if memory serves, William Henry Parker, but 'George' to everyone and he looked just like the illustration on a packet of Player's cigarettes.

His golden ballcock was on the stump mainmast in my time on board and he was liable to be seen up the mast in a scruffy pair of overalls, polishing it just as we were entering Sliema Creek ceremonially.

There was a legend that he did not really like going on seasonal leave — maybe he missed his tot — but that if forced to do so, he would leave a pre-paid telegram with the Coxswain, addressed to himself, to be sent after two or three days which instructed him to 'Return on board immediately' and signed 'Commanding Officer', thus allowing him the excuse he needed.

Divisions were an activity George usually managed to avoid, though he would turn up if a Flag

Officer was to be present and by special request if Captain(D) was the inspecting officer. — Rear Admiral J. A. L. Myres, Kennington, Oxford.

Ribbons replaced

REFERENCE the article concerning members of the Royal Naval Association who might be wearing the RFR Long Service Medal with an incorrect ribbon (January issue), I was somewhat surprised to see my Directorate being taken to task in this way since neither I nor my staff were aware of any problem.

I would like to correct the impression given by the article that we have a medals office — we are a relatively small organisation and we do not warrant our own medals office.

Our role is to assess a reservist's entitlement to a particular medal and then to request the medals office in the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency (Centurion (AFPAA(C))) to effect its issue.

I have been in contact with the Medals Office in Gosport and they have confirmed that the correct ribbon is now being sent out with the RFR Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. To amplify what you say in the article, I am assured that the RFR LS&GC, whilst discontinued with effect from April 1, 2000, as announced in DCI (RN) 54/00, continues to be issued under transitional arrangements which remain in place until the end of March 2003.

It was also noted that AFPAA(C) has received two enquiries as a result of your article and the correct ribbon has now been supplied. AFPAA(C) has no way of determining who has been sent an incorrect ribbon in the past but will be happy to replace errors on written application. The address is EDS/AFPAA(C)), NPP(Acs) 1F, Room 1068, Centurion Building, Grange Rd, Gosport, Hants PO13 9XA. — Capt C. G. Massie-Taylor, Director Naval Reserves

Letters to the Editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication. email correspondents are also requested to provide this information.



No. 571 48th year

Editorial & Business address:
Leviathan Block,
HMS Nelson, Portsmouth,
Hants, PO1 3HH

Editor: Jim Allaway
Deputy Editor: Anton Hanney
Assistant Editors:
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Business Manager: Glen Gould

Editorial Lines...

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Slow post from China

REGARDING the query about mail sent 'via Siberia' (January issue), in the period up to World War II China had virtually no internal postal system, rather relying on the use of small coastal vessels to bring the mails to convenient ports.

The letters were then re-routed, often by mules, to inland destinations. Thus the preferred means of access to that country was via the Trans Siberian Railway to Vladivostok.

From here, all the letters would have been sorted and sent on by small sailing ships. This was much faster than the sea voyage to Hong Kong which had been the only route possible prior to 1901, when the railway was completed.

I enclose a postcard of Royal Marines Light Infantry at Wei-Hai-Wei, posted at Liu-Kung-Tau in 1921 which also received the postmark of the British Post Office of Chefoo. — R. V. Swarbrick, Melton Mowbray.



Pyke's carrier plans had to be put on ice

MY DAUGHTER, Lorian Overson, a first year Naval engineering bursar at Lancaster University, passes her copy of *Navy News* on to me, so I am able to reply to your request for further information on the 'Carrier that cut no ice' (January issue).

An account of it appears in Dr Magnus Pyke's book *Butter Side Up*, first published in 1976:

"Geoffrey Pyke (Magnus's cousin, not his brother, as we styled him last month), at that time (1942) serving as an ideas man in a special unit which formed part of the staff of Lord Louis Mountbatten, was struck with two ideas about ice... The first was that ice is very hard: anyone who has ever gone skating and has fallen down knows this... but while everyone knows that ice is hard, few people have bothered to measure how hard it is.

"Its hardness, as my cousin Geoffrey Pyke discovered when he had obtained the necessary information about it, is very similar to that of concrete.

"Consequently, if one constructed a structure of ice and reinforcing steel rods, as used in the building industry, one would obtain a substance with the strength and consistency of reinforced concrete. But reinforced concrete that would float.

"Geoffrey Pyke's second idea was more remarkable in its way than the first. If one makes a slushy mixture of water and wood pulp, using a recipe with anything from four to 14 per cent of wood pulp to water, and freezes it, one obtains a substance that is not only from two to 12 times as strong as concrete but one which is quite difficult to melt.

"The idea was to use this material — which was given the name pycrete — to build giant aircraft carriers. These were to be 12,000ft long and with hulls 30ft thick. Though these dimensions might have seemed large for ships in 1942, they were small for icebergs.

"And the proposed pycrete vessels were to have been proper ships, yet in war they would have been just as invulnerable as icebergs are.

"Not only was it calculated that a torpedo striking one broadside on would only make a crater in its side 3ft deep and 20ft across, but even if it did, cold air from a refrigerating plant carried in the ship would be circulated through cardboard tubes fitted veinlike into the pycrete hull and, by adding the appropriate proportions of wood pulp and refreezing the required amount of sea water, the crater could quickly be repaired.

"In Geoffrey Pyke's memorandum to Lord Mountbatten the idea for constructing a pycrete ship was worked out in detail. The splendid 30ft thick deck would make an admirable landing place for aircraft.

"Down below, in the hangar where the aircraft were to be parked, a false door was to be installed so that the aeroplane need not stand about on the ice. And the same arrangements were planned for the crew's quarters: far from being cold, the living accommodation would have been particularly snug.

"Ice is an excellent insulator: anyone who has ever visited a colony of Eskimos is struck with the warmth of an igloo... It would have been even snuggier in an aircraft carrier made of ice because it was planned to line the accommodation with panelling, ceilings and floors.

"The whole idea was quite thoroughly researched. For example, a lot of work was done to assess the engineering characteristics of pycrete maintained at a number of different temperatures and such mechanical characteristics as 'creep' and 'fatigue' were studied.

"Indeed, had not the atomic bomb been dropped on Japan and the war come to an end, ice ships — not crude icebergs but properly engineered and metal-clad vessels made enormously strong and especially buoyant — would almost certainly have appeared on the oceans of the world.

"Geoffrey Pyke thought up a number of cunning ideas specially suited to warfare. For example, pycrete landing craft would be excellently well fitted for amphibious operations. Approaching a hostile coast with the ramp — 30ft thick, be it remembered — would provide admirable security for the attacking troops.

"On reaching their target area, the commando forces, with a few swift strokes of a specially designed blow-torch applied along predetermined fracture lines, could cut out part of the side of the side of the craft, like a drawbridge dropping in an ancient fortress, and out the armoured vehicles would roll.

"Similar advantages could be conceived in the design of pycrete oil rig supply ships and cross-Channel ferries." — Eddy Overson, Gainsborough, Lincs

Amazing mace tale

YOUR warming account of the return after 40 lost years of former Royal Marines drum major Jack Kennelly's personal mace, fashioned for him by shipmates out of an oar, has reminded me that at 90 I am possibly one of the last witnesses of the loss overboard, into the murky waters of Portsmouth Harbour, of another very special mace indeed — no less than the oldest and most prized mace in the whole of the Marines' ceremonial regalia.

Amid the pre-D-Day bustle and the imminent handing over of my LCPV squadron to the Royals, I was summoned to a conference which took me by duty boat to Priddy's Hard.

Already seated were some dockyard mates, a Wren officer and a young Royal Marines Wren. All eyes were on the young girl for, clutched between her knees, was this towering mace, the sun glinting on venerable wood and brilliant brass.

Shyly she explained she had been briefed on its great value and was proud to have been selected to escort it to a Warships Week parade where a Marine drum major would be waiting to receive it.

Nearing the shore, the girl jumped to her feet and, oddly, the mace jumped with her, crashed down on the deckboards, bounced high in the air and then, to the horror of all, over the side into the water.

Having to hurry to my meeting, I had time only to be assured by the cox'n that he had marked the spot and to notice the Wren officer trying to comfort her tearful junior.

I recounted this story several times during my two months in Ferry Control on the Normandy beaches. Two years later, meeting up with the Marines again in Port Swettenham, Malaysia, on Operation Zipper, I was told a probably fictional addition to the story, that the Wren officer had doffed her uniform, in whole or in part, and dived overboard to retrieve the weighty object, to the immense relief of all. — Lt Cdr J. H. Brittain, RNVR, Tonbridge, Kent.

Stand by to what?

DURING World War II the light cruiser HMS Hermione was the senior ship in Force X which on August 2 1941 (along with four other warships) was given the task of ferrying about 1,100 troops on a fast run from Gibraltar to Malta.

On board the Hermione there were several hundred RAF personnel as our 'guests' who were allotted the best places to kip down.

This was not too difficult as we, the Ship's Company, were at Action Stations for the whole outward journey.

At 0400 the following pipe was made: 'Do you hear there? Stand by to ram!'

And a couple of minutes later quite a shudder was felt throughout the ship.

It was then piped that we had rammed and sunk an Italian sub-

marine (which we later learned was named the Tambien).

On safe arrival at Malta we were very amused to learn of the confusion when our RAF comrades in arms heard the first pipe and prepared to scarper.

Apparently they thought the order was 'Stand by to run!' but no one knew in which direction. — A. Norton, Leyland, Lancs.

Missing two days

YOU report that HMS Bangor sailed from Cadiz on Trafalgar Day "the same day" that the enemy had sailed 196 years ago (December issue).

Just for their record, the combined Franco-Spanish fleet that opposed Nelson at Trafalgar left Cadiz on October 19, 1805, two days before the battle. — D. Shannon, Editor, *The Nelson Dispatch*, Salter Point, W. Australia.

Not the first

IN the Mines centre spread (December issue) you state that the Mk 1 magnetic mine was not used until 1942.

This is incorrect. The first Mk1 mines were laid in Tromsø Fjord in the summer of 1940, by B flight of 823 Squadron, disembarked from HMS Glorious, operating from Hatston in Orkney. 821 Sqn aircraft also took part in this operation. — T. A. Woodruff, Chepstow.

AS A slightly tongue-in-cheek comment, we would like to bring it to your attention that the original 'Saint' (having obtained copyright) is still alive and well and will be so for a few years to come.

Our RAS flag, donated by the *Southern Daily Echo*, depicts a version of the stick drawing. Beware of inferior imitations — we are the real thing! Coverage of our return in March would alleviate some of the pain at being overlooked!! — The Ship's Company, HMS Southampton.

The correspondents are referring to our December front page picture of HMS St Albans, captioned 'Enter the Saint' — Ed.

WITH regard to claims about the White Ensign in the Zuider Zee (December issue) I don't wish to make claim to be the first to be there, but I was the Buffer of HMS Brinkley in 1956 when we went into the Zuider Zee, then up a river to a place called Kampen where we stayed for five days.

While we were at Kampen the local council laid on a film show of how the area known as the North East Polder was reclaimed from the Zuider Zee. HMS Brinkley was the forerunner of the Mine Countermeasures vessels. — R. S. Beech, Horncastle, Lincs

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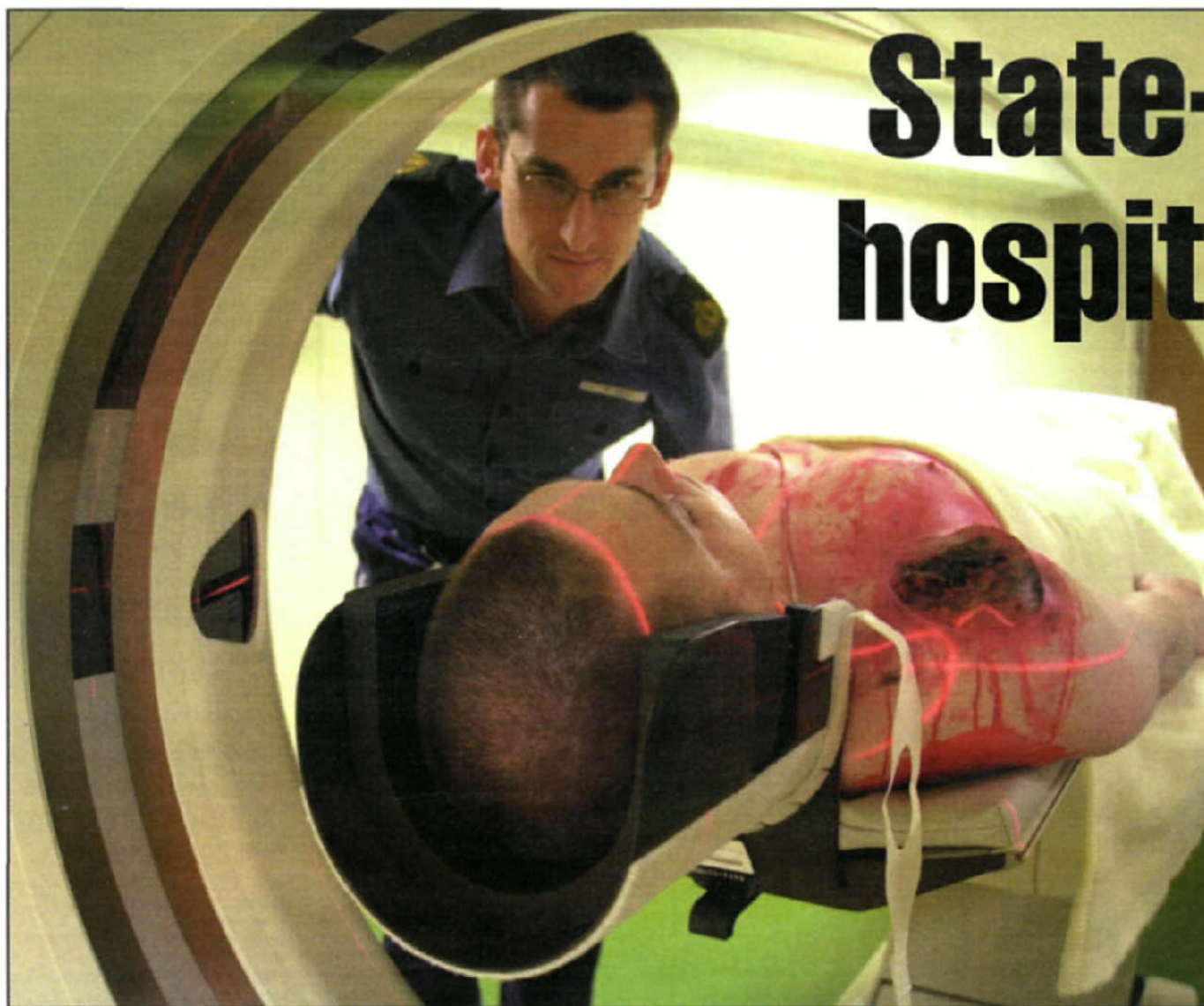
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● A 'patient' (with fake injuries!) goes through the spiral CT scanner in the newly-refitted hospital on RFA Argus.

Pictures: Richard Thompson

State-of-the-art hospital arrives in Argus

THE AVIATION Training Ship, RFA Argus, has undergone a major programme to build into three of her decks a modern hospital, as part of her secondary role as a Primary Casualty Receiving Ship.

RFA Argus has now been equipped with purpose-built treatment facilities that equal those found in a NHS hospital.

This includes a state-of-the-art spiral CT (computer tomography) scanner which gives 3D pictures inside the human body, showing broken bones or internal damage.

There are three operating theatres, plus a specialist head and neck theatre. The new refit is air conditioned, with its own drainage unit, to prevent nursing waste going into the main ship's tank.

The 100 beds are split into three categories: 10 intensive care; 20 high dependency beds; and 70 ward beds. New bunks allow easy access to the patient for treatment.

The medical staff on board can be a basic team of eight, or

increase to over 200 medical personnel, including doctors and surgeons, QARNNS nurses, Medical Assistants, Medical Support staff, and RM Bandmen as stretcher bearers.

These medics on a day-to-day basis are caring for patients in NHS hospitals and departments around the country. The Aviation Training Ship's new care facilities will be instantly familiar.

RFA Argus had first served as the Primary Casualty Receiving Ship in the Gulf War in the early 90s, equipped at speed with hospital facilities through 22 'portacabins' fitted into the forward hangar.

Through these hurried arrangements, she provided the medical staff in the Gulf with 100 beds, three operating tables, a triage and resus area, x-ray and lab facilities, which worked and survived for ten years until this new more permanent structure was added.

The medics and nurses were involved in the planning and implementation for the new refit on the RFA ship.

Designers for the new hospital went along to exercises and talked to the end-users about their needs.

This facility will be able to provide full treatment, caring for patients for up to ten days.

Argus in her role as Primary Casualty Receiving Ship is now fully stocked and ready for action, and if required, could be made ready for patients in a few hours.

The response from the QARNNS is enthusiastic. One officer commented: "Being in the Royal Navy makes us more than just medical personnel, we are all prepared to go that little bit further, think on our feet, and work outside our normal sphere to ensure our Service personnel receive the best possible care in any given situation."

The new medical facilities in RFA Argus will help to maintain that high quality of care, and prove the RN commitment to all the medical branches in the Service.

■ See QARNNS Centenary Supplement in this issue.

The role of naval nursing

THE QUEEN Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service's main role in conflict is to staff RFA Argus. The first male Matron in Chief, Captain Mick Bowen QARNNS, talks to Helen Craven about the Service, its recruitment and its future.

How does it feel to be the first male Matron in Chief?

Because of the nature of integration in our Service, that's happened to me right the way through my career. I was the first man to head up the nursing school, I was the first male lieutenant commander, first male commander, the first male captain.

I would obviously like to think that I have achieved what I have on merit rather than as a man.

In the Service, the term Matron in Chief is a separate title in itself with a long history behind it, so it means a lot to our people.

The alternative title is more in keeping with the rest of the Service – Director of Naval Nursing Services. But I do use both, and I'm not shy of using both titles at all because they obviously have a lot of meaning.

And our patron for many many years has always been a princess or queen, and patron is technically a male title.

What is the operational role for QARNNS nurses?

In times of conflict, which is our reason for being here, we have a commitment to the Primary Casualty Receiving Ship (PCRS) and surgical area.

We support all surgical teams, and are dedicated to 3 Commando Brigade. We have a contingent that forms together with the Joint Rapid Reaction Force, and we augment lines in areas of conflict, wherever they may be.

I would foresee that in the next 12 months, maybe two years, we will have a Nurse in Ocean or one of the carriers. Indeed we are looking at having a nurse permanently in RFA Argus.

How do you recruit your QARNNS nurses?

We have little difficulty recruiting Nurse Ratings as unqualified students.

The direct entry recruitment method, for people already with registered nursing qualifications, is our main problem. Once someone's actually qualified and settled into the Health Service, it's very difficult to get them to come out of that and into this Service.

We currently have over 70 offi-

cers and about 130 nurse ratings.

Our requirement is for 102 nursing officers and approximately 250 nurse ratings. The situation at the moment is that we are badly underborne. So we're busy recruiting people. And our targets are geared towards reaching those numbers by 2004 to 2005.

What sort of training do QARNNS nurses receive?

We've trained Registered Nurses since the early 60s, and we continue to do that in conjunction with the University of Portsmouth, and more recently with the University of Central England.

We also provide an internal method of training for postgraduate education. We run one of the few, if not the only, military nursing degrees in the world.

What's the incentive to join QARNNS?

First of all, I think people want to join the Services because they want to do something different, and they like the idea of doing something for their country and working for the armed forces, as well as being a nurse.

They also, I think, are attracted by the training that we can offer.

Increasingly for the students, they are attracted by the money as well. Because – although there is obviously a commitment – we do offer a salary rather than a bursary for the trainees.

But I think the money side, in fairness, is not their primary reason for joining the Service.

People want to do something. They want to do something different. They want to do something involved with caring in conflict situations.

Do you get many other branches of the Royal Navy transferring across?

I would say almost 50% of our students are branch transfers. Not just from the medical branch, but other branches in the Service.

So we've got OMs, WEMs, we've had Chefs, and obviously we do get a lot of medical branch as well.

What do you see as the future for QARNNS?

One of expansion, but also one

of further professional development. I can foresee along with the Health Service that we will have many more nurses educated to degree level – if not all.

From a defence medical services point of view, increasingly we are making ourselves more obvious to the Health Service – because the fact remains that we educate and train nurses not just for the Armed Services but for the nation as well.

So we need to be recognised for what we are contributing to the nation, and we need support from the nation to provide what we do in order to meet our operational requirements.

In the long term, we will continue to develop professionally, and meet Government directives.

But we need to get our numbers up and to develop the careers for our Service personnel in peacetime, conflict, ashore or afloat.

For information on QARNNS careers, see www.rnjobs.co.uk.



● Captain Mick Bowen talks to a nurse on RFA Argus.

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Ships of the Royal Navy No 555



Sir Geraint aids troubled Africa

Since May last year, RFA Sir Geraint has been based permanently at Freetown, providing support for the British Forces ashore in Sierra Leone.

The presence in the port of this Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship gives confidence to the increasing numbers of commercial ships visiting to unload cargoes, part of the effort to bring the war-torn country back on its feet.

The ship provides secure (and air-conditioned) accommodation, stores, rest and recreation facilities for the troops, and support also for the Field Hospital which is erected on the jetty alongside the ship.

She has a small detachment of Royal Marines based on board to crew the landing craft (LCVP) and soldiers of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, based in Marchwood.

These soldiers operate the Mexiflote raft that is used to transport military vehicles and equipment across from Lungi, where the airport is situated, to Freetown – a 45 minute voyage.

Strong links have been built up between the RFA personnel and local organisations – in particular the Cape Community School, where much building and repair work has been carried out.

More recently the ship was involved in salvaging a UN helicopter which crashed with all seven crew and passengers into the sea off Freetown.

The operation was led by RFA Sir Geraint. The men from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment used the Mexiflote as a platform for a mobile crane, and with a team of Ukrainian divers, the wreckage was lifted from the seabed.

On a lighter note, RFA Sir Geraint was host to a CSE 'Entertain the Troops' variety show, when the ship's company and British soldiers enjoyed the delights of such acts as Cheryl Baker and the Trilogy Dancers performing on the flight deck.

After nearly 35 years in service, RFA Sir Geraint and her sister ships have been worked hard, and are now coming to the end of their active lives.

Replacement ships are currently being built – they are the Bay-class LSLs, much larger than the current craft, the first due to enter service

Facts and figures

Class: Landing Ship Logistic (LSL)
Pennant number: L3027
Builder: Alexander Stephen, Glasgow
Entered service: 1967
Lloyds classification: +100 A1 +LMC Class 1 RO-RO Passenger
Port of registry: London
Displacement: 5,674 tonnes
Length: 125.5 metres
Beam: 18.2 metres
Draught: 4 metres
Speed: 14 knots (normal), 16 knots (max)
Complement: 52
Main machinery: Two ten-cylinder four stroke turbo-charged Mirreles National diesels; plus one 400hp bow thruster
Landing platforms: Aft: one spot for Sea King or Lynx; vehicle deck: one spot for Chinook, Sea King or Lynx
Flight deck letters: GR

in 2004.

RFA Sir Geraint is one of five Landing Ships Logistic (LSL) in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service.

Her two Mirreles National diesel engines give a maximum speed of 16 knots. RFA Sir Geraint is also fitted with a bow thruster for increased manoeuvrability.

Her crew comprises 52 British registered officers and ratings, and is capable of carrying up to 350 troops with their equipment and vehicles.

The role of RFA Sir Geraint is to support amphibious operations by landing troops, tanks, vehicles and other heavy equipment in port or on any suitable shore.

To accomplish this task the ship has many special design features, including stern doors for rapid loading and unloading.

In simple terms, the ship is part landing craft and part Ro-Ro ferry. The ship is also able to operate helicopters from its two flight decks sited on the stern and on the deck amidships.

Her highly specialised role means that RFA Sir Geraint is in great demand for service with British, NATO and United Nations forces.

Landing Ships Logistic of the RFA are also used to act as sup-



● Landing Ship (Logistic) RFA Sir Geraint off the coast of West Africa.

port and mother ships for Royal Navy mine countermeasures task groups on overseas deployments.

The ship won Battle Honours in the Falklands War and was involved in supporting British forces in former Yugoslavia.

The previous Sir Geraint was a minesweeper trawler built by Lewis in April 1942, and sold on in 1946.

BATTLE HONOURS

North Sea 1942
 Normandy 1944
 South Atlantic 1982

AIRCRAFT OF THE ROYAL NAVY No 64



● Airspeed Oxford Mk I number R6180

Airspeed Oxford

WELL over 100 Airspeed Oxfords saw service with the Royal Navy during World War II, but none were actually built for the Senior Service.

All of these aircraft, a military training development of the Envoy, were from RAF stocks, but they were widely used by the Navy at a number of air stations in several second-line squadrons, including 758 NAS (Naval Advanced Instrument Flying School), 762 NAS (Two Engine Conversion Unit), 778 NAS (Service Trials Unit), 782 (Northern Communications Squadron) and 792 NAS

(Night Fighter Training Unit).

The unarmed Oxford was powered by two 370hp Armstrong Siddeley Cheetah X engines, giving it a top speed of just under 190mph.

It had a climb rate of a little under 1,000ft a minute, and its service ceiling was almost 20,000ft. The aircraft had a maximum weight of 8,000lb, and could accommodate two pilots and up to four passengers.

The type first flew in 1937, but large numbers were retained after the war, and the last Oxford retired in 1954.



The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Registered Charity No. 1075015

HISTORY

Children of the Royal Naval Services have been supported for over one hundred years by the charitable funds, originally as orphanages but now

in ways appropriate to present day needs, such as schools, homes, special needs establishments, holidays and in their own homes in times of family crisis.

AIM

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund

formed from The RN & RM Children's Trust and The RN & RM Children's Home is the premier charity for providing charitable help to children of serving and ex-serving personnel of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, The Queen Alexandra Royal Naval Nursing Service, the former Women's Royal Naval Service and the reserves of these forces.

Where children are in need, hardship or distress.

The needs of children are paramount and help is provided when not available from family or statutory sources.

HOW HELP IS ORGANISED

The Trustees are mainly serving officers or other naval personnel together with civilian Trustees who bring experience in other fields to the problems encountered.

consideration of every circumstance is therefore given swift and sympathetic attention by people who understand the difficulties of service and seafaring life.

The RN & RM Children's Fund works closely with many charities dedicated to providing help to children. If the type of assistance falls outside the objects of the Fund, then the applicant will be referred to other charities with the object of creating a care package.

Applications can be made at any time. Those seeking assistance can contact the office direct for an application form.

Applications are also received from a number of sources such as the Naval Personnel and Family Service (NPFS), SSAFA/Forces Help, the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT), the British Legion, as well as schools, Local Authorities, Health Visitors and many others.

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund

311 Twyford Avenue, Stamshaw, Portsmouth PO2 8PE

Applications and referrals should be made to:

Mrs. M. A. Bateman or Mrs. L. Smith at the address above or by phone Tel: 023 9263 9534



People in the News

NAAFI man picks up MBE

A CIVILIAN who manages vital domestic supplies on board the helicopter carrier HMS Ocean has been presented with his MBE by the Prince of Wales.

NAAFI manager Trevor Milton had his sterling efforts aboard the warship recognised in the Queen's

Birthday Honours in October.

Trevor has served on more than a dozen ships, and has worked in major conflicts including the Falklands War and Gulf War.

He described his day at the Palace as the second proudest of his life – after the birth of his son.

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Space man takes top job in RNR



THE ROYAL Naval Reserve looked to the stars when they sought to appoint their new highest-ranking officer.

UK space satellite designer John Ellis took over the post of head of the RNR, with the rank of commodore, succeeding Cdre Gerald Wood.

Cdre Ellis will advise on the training and capability of the RNR, which consists of around 3,100 volunteers. He will also decide how they can achieve their primary aim of supporting the Navy in times of crisis.

The new man said he is in regular contact with the Director Naval Reserve, and that his remit is "to give leadership to the organisation and advise on how the RNR can provide the required number of trained reservists when called on by the Royal Navy."

The former Dartmouth student left the Navy as a lieutenant commander having qualified as a principal warfare officer.

He previously served in the Royal Yacht as Assistant Navigating Officer, and was mentioned in dispatches in 1975. He joined the RNR in 1983 at HMS Flying Fox.

After leaving the Navy, Cdre Ellis joined British Aerospace Space Systems, working for the UK Space Industry as a business development manager.

He now works for the Government's Central Research Lab, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Oxfordshire on climate research satellites.

Cdre Ellis is married, and his son Charles (23) is serving in the Trident submarine HMS Victorious.

● **Commodore John Ellis, new head of the Royal Naval Reserve, with his son Charles, an officer in HMS Victorious, on board HMS Victory.**



● **WO Mick Howe.**

Bright idea is perfect conclusion to career

WO Mick Howe brought a 26-year career with the Royal Navy to a successful conclusion when he was awarded £150 for a bright idea which came to fruition.

Mick spent his final two years in the Navy at HMS Raleigh, the new entry training establishment at Torpoint in Cornwall, where he was Administration and Training Design Officer within the seaman-ship school.

He earned his 'leaving present' for his idea of mapping military skills against civilian qualifications, which has led to the award of the Maritime Coastguard Agency Efficient Deck Hand certificate to many Service personnel.

The Navy is keen to support its personnel with their ideas on efficiencies for activities within and outside the establishment.

Mick said he was sad to leave the Navy after a tremendous career, but he is now looking forward to a new role with the Devon and Cornwall Police as a bobby in the Caradon district.

"After 26 years in the Service I would not hesitate in recommending this professional career to any youngster who is looking for a challenge, a sense of achievement and is prepared to deal with responsibility," said Mick, who is married with two daughters.



● **CPO Simon Allison.**

Simon bags air award

THE FORMER Chief Instructor at the Navy's Dunker in Yeovilton has been presented with a prestigious award.

CPO Simon Allison, based at the Royal Navy Helicopter Underwater Escape Training Unit at Yeovilton, was given the Sir James Martin Award by the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators for having "worked extremely hard to improve and advance the quality and standards of training provided to tri-Service, foreign military and civil aviation personnel."

Simon is no stranger to the limelight, having been involved in helicopter rescues in 1984 on the Ten Tors and 1997 in the St Malo ferry incident.

Simon, who is married with two children, has now retired from the Navy.

Diver wins US Fleet accolade

A ROYAL Navy chief who was described by his American hosts as the best chief diver in the fleet has been awarded a medal for outstanding service with the US Navy.

CPO(D) Adam Wheeler was presented with the US Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal by Capt Belcher USN following a two-year exchange with the Consolidated Divers Unit in San Diego, California.

During his time out West Adam oversaw numerous major diving projects and helped to help increase levels of team efficiency.

His citation, signed by the Secretary for the US Navy, speaks of his high levels of professionalism and dedication which helped to reduce ship repair times and resulted in savings of more than two million dollars.

His last report before leaving



● **CPO(D) Adam Wheeler receives his US Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal from Capt Belcher USN.**

America acknowledged his crucial role and credited him with being the best Chief Diver in the Pacific Fleet.

On his return to the UK Adam joined the Defence Diving School in Portsmouth, where he now

works as an instructor on career courses.

The Commanding Officer, Cdr Chris Amey, hosted the US navy delegation, and in addition to the medal presentation gave them an insight into RN diving training.

A family of communicators

RUSSELL Smith has set off on the career path followed by his father – and Dad was there to see his son take his first step.

Russell (19) joined the Royal Navy as a Communications Technician last year, and has moved to HMS Collingwood to continue specialist training.

His proud father Ron Smith was at HMS Raleigh to see Russell complete his eight-week basic training course – as were Russell's mother Jill and several other family members.

Ron a Warrant Officer (Communications Technician) joined the Navy in 1969 at the age of 15, and among his most memorable moments were the handover of Hong Kong to China and attending a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

Ron said: "The Royal Navy has provided me with a first-class career, an excellent social life, and allowed my family to join me whilst I have travelled the world."

"It was Russell's own choice to join the Service, but I would hope that watching his Dad thoroughly enjoy his time in the Royal Navy helped him to make that decision."



● **WO(CT) Ron Smith with his son Russell, who is following in Dad's footsteps.**

Penfriends

Don't want to start the New Year lonely? Find new friends to share Valentines with! It's so easy! Simply follow the instructions below...

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LADY 50'S, comfortable lifestyle. WLTW gent same to enjoy everyday life. **Box Feb 14**

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-PEN PALS-

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People in the News



Famous name back at airfield

A FAMOUS name was back at Naval airfields in Cornwall to see the remnants of cutting edge experiments from the 1950s.

Barnes Wallis, son of the great wartime inventor of the same name, went to RN air station Culdrose and its satellite field at Predannack to see some of the installations used by his father.

Barnes Wallis senior, who invented the Dambusters bouncing bomb, carried out trials on prototype swing-wing fast jets Swallow and Wild Goose.

Although they never entered service, they heralded the future for jet fighters – and for months Predannack was rife with rumours of top secret, pilotless planes.

These aircraft were, in fact, half-scale models, designed to test the inventor's theories.

Throughout these trials Wallis was assisted by his RAF liaison officer – Gp Capt Leonard Cheshire who, during his time at Predannack, was inspired to found the Cheshire Homes movement.

Barnes Wallis the younger was taken to Predannack by Culdrose Senior Air Traffic Control Officer Lt Cdr Geoff Bowker, where he saw his father's test ramp, a mile-long concrete structure fitted with a precision-built railway track along which bogies supporting the test aircraft were fired by rocket.

"It is fascinating to see at first hand evidence of my father's work of 50 years ago," he said.

"I am grateful that the Royal Navy has protected the ramp, and I hope that it will remain as a monument to him and his scientific endeavours."



● Receiving their DLO Commendation awards from General Sir Sam Cowan on behalf of the 2001 Faslane Fair Committee are: (from left) Cdr Bill Jones, Lt Lig Hill and Lt Cdr Nick Toomey.

Picture: Darren Setter (DLO, Bath).

Faslane Fair team honoured

ORGANISERS of the Faslane Fair in Scotland have won an award for their efforts last year.

The Faslane Fair Committee, Royal Navy and civilian personnel from Clyde Naval Base, were awarded the Chief of Defence Logistics Commendation – the first time such awards have been made, and the top honour of the awards scheme.

The Faslane team, who work at the arrangements all year round, is 15 strong, led by chairman Cdr Bill Jones (rtd), who has been in charge for eight years.

The Fair, held every June, had humble beginnings as a street fair in the Married Quarters Estate, but has grown to an event which is best described as a military tattoo.

It is staged on the seafront at Helensburgh, demonstrating to people in Scotland the presence of a sizeable defence organisation in

the region and raising money for local charities.

In 2001, nearly £20,000 was raised, and the money used towards a new minibus for the Helensburgh Sea Cadets and a new dinghy for the Challenger Sailing for the Disabled charity.

Last year for the first time, to coincide with the centenary of the Submarine Service, bus and boat trips were laid on to the base, and it is hoped the boat trips will be repeated this year.

The citation read: "This Award recognises the team's achievements in organising the annual Faslane Fair, which promoted such a positive image of the Base in the region."

"The Base-wide team and other volunteers clearly demonstrated excellent innovation, teamwork, planning and organisational skills."

"These proved fundamental in enhancing both the Royal Navy's and the Base's profiles and immensely strengthening links

within the region."

Cdr Jones said: "Although the committee put an enormous amount of work in to organizing the Faslane Fair, our efforts are always rewarded by the enthusiasm of the crowds that come along and enjoy the events we put on."

"It is enormously satisfying to be able to raise significant sums of money and see it go to such worthy charitable causes in the local area."

"We are of course immensely proud to have been selected as recipients of the inaugural CDL Commendation awards."

The members of the committee were Chairman: Cdr Bill Jones; Secretary: Leslie Currie; Raffle: PO Wren Marie Bennett; Offshore: Lt Cdr Rufus Redman; Stalls: Bill Reaney; Catering: Lt Coralie Horne; Treasurer: Lt Jude Terry; Tours: Joanne Smith; Site Manager: Lt Will Proctor; Corporate: Lt Cdr Nick Toomey; PR: Lt Lig Hill; Programme: Lt Jim Schmidt; Commercial: Lt Cdr Ian Shaw; Logistics: Mark Kelly and Arena: WO Nick Carter.



● Lt Col Alan Waterworth and Maj Jane Morley.

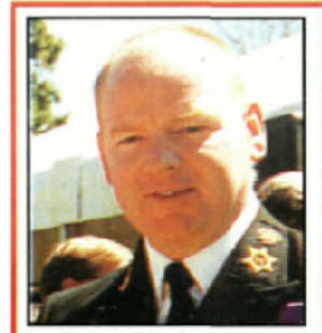
Same skills, different uniform

TWO medics in khaki, pictured returning from Exercise Saif Sareea in Oman, may have been more easily recognised were they wearing dark blue.

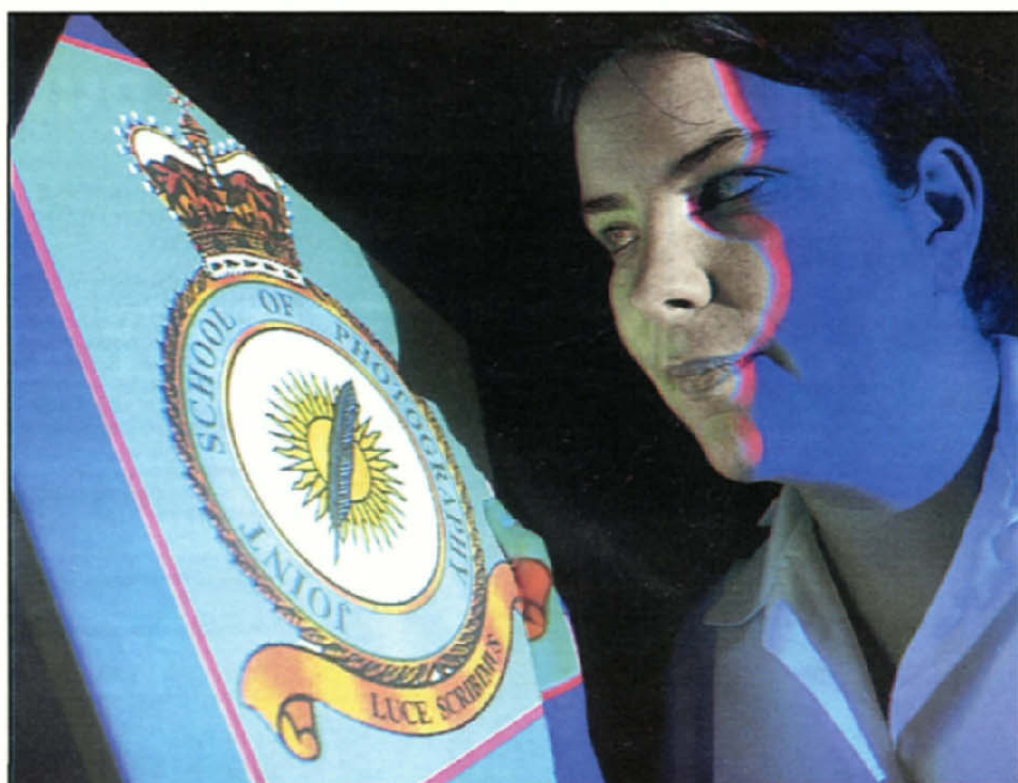
Lt Col Alan Waterworth RAMC(V) and Maj Jane Morley QARANC(V) spent many years in

the RNR Medical Branch, latterly as senior managers in the ranks of surgeon captain and commander respectively.

They were keen to continue using their expertise, hence the uniform switch – and their stint with 22 Field Hospital in Oman.



● CPO WTR David Bonas is pictured at the dedication of the Magna Carta Place in Canberra – one of the less-onerous of his tasks on the British Defence Liaison Staff in the Australian capital. Magna Carta Place is a precinct marking the enduring relationship between Australia and the UK.



● Leading Wren Lou Baverstock.

Picture: Cpl Mark Ballantyne (Royal Logistic Corps).

Lou notches a first

NAVAL photographer Lou Baverstock has become the first member of the Royal Naval Reserve Air Branch to complete the PO Qualifying Course at the Joint School of Photography.

Lou (34), who is married to S/Lt Andy Baverstock, left the regular Navy in 1999 to concentrate on raising their son Jack, but as she missed Service life so much she

decided to join the Reserves.

The seven-week qualifying course aims to prepare junior rates in the RN Photographic Branch for appointment to the rate of Petty Officer.

Students are required to demonstrate a high level of skill in various tasks, including public relations photography, portraiture, displays and digital imagery.

They are also tested on their management, report writing, brief-

ing and lesson delivery skills.

Lou, a leading wren, lives at RAF Brampton at Huntingdonshire, where her husband is a Photographic Branch Officer and Imagery Analyst at the Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre.

The Joint School of Photography (JSOP), which trains cameramen and women from all three Services, is based at RAF Cosford near Wolverhampton.

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If you do not wish us to contact you by email, please tick. ☐ All items are offered subject to availability. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

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Helping Hands

Challenge Ben Nevis for dolphin swimming

A NAVY team from HMS Ark Royal set out to climb two-thirds the height of Mount Everest in just one day.

The Ben Nevis Challenge is a 24-hour walking marathon, scaling the highest mountain in Great Britain a total of three times.

The whole ship's company was entirely behind the effort to help two girls who live with cerebral palsy in Gosport.

A total amount of £1,323.84 was collected on board, and given to the girls and their families at a presentation on the ship just before Christmas.

The money will allow the two girls to experience the new treatment, Dolphin Human Therapy (DHT).

The hope is that this will increase the children's attention span, developing their brains, and perhaps even allowing the two girls to speak for the first time.

CPOMEM Andy Wadham, the event organiser, said: "It was definitely hard work at the time, but really worth it!"

Navy helps out kids in Rio

CASA Jimmy has received more help from the Royal Navy.

HMS Endurance stopped off at Rio en route to her Antarctic goal.

A team with specialist skills including nursing and engineering turned up armed with tools and a great deal of energy.

Despite the hot and humid climate, the team spent a full day retiling roofs, digging drainage ditches and fixing equipment.

But they still had energy for a game of volleyball with the children at the end of the day.

Casa Jimmy is a children's home, begun by the Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page, that gives shelter to street children in Brazil.

A grand day out

FIVE children from the special needs Crown School in Burton upon Trent had a fantastic day out with HMS Victorious at HM Naval Base, Clyde.

The children and their three teachers were given a chance to explore the Vanguard-class submarine with six guides from the crew.

Then after lunch on board, the party set off to see some more of the latest technology at the Ship Control simulator, Voyager, before heading on to the Command Team Trainer, Thrasher.

Next in the hectic round of events, the MOD Police gave a display of police dog handling, and provided a water-front tour, courtesy of the

Clyde Marine Unit.

The day ended with a 5-a-side football match against a Victorious team at the Sportsdrome.

The day was described as "a memorable day for both children and HMS Victorious".

Victorious has been affiliated to the Crown School for several years, and crew members visit the school regularly.

Over 2001, the bonds were strengthened through taking part in Remembrance Day, the International Barrel Rolling Championships and the rededication of the local Sea Cadet training ship in the presence of the Duke of York.

● AB Gary Hackett shows a visitor how to use a headset.

Picture: LA Phot Max Merrill



RN Trust supports thousands in need

THE ROYAL Naval Benevolent Trust, whose primary function is to provide grants to past and present RN ratings and RM other ranks in times of need, stepped forward to help in almost 5,200 cases during the year from 2000 to 2001.

Over £2 million in grants and annuities was given out to serving and retired members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines

and their families.

For the first time in its 79 year history, the Annual Meeting of the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) was held in the West Country at Saltash.

The President of the Trust, Rear Admiral A M Norman, welcomed the audience from civic authorities, and charities, along with RN ships and establishments.

He told the guests that the Trust was keen to bring the activities of the RNBT to a wider audience.

He stressed that: "It is, of course, people who the RNBT care for; serving personnel and their

families and ex-serving personnel and their families."

Admiral Norman explained: "In the year under report, 2000/2001, the RNBT assisted in 4,060 cases resulting in £1,660,759 in grants."

"In addition we supported over 1,100 annuitants to the tune of £457,600."

He reminded his audience that none of this would be possible without the assistance of other charities.

The President particularly mentioned the King George's Fund for Sailors that provided £326,000 and Greenwich hospital which provided the entire supply of money needed for annuitants.

Over half a million pounds had come into the Fund through legacies in the course of this year.

However, he did mention the difficult times which the Trust is

currently enduring due to the decline in the stock market.

The President also told his audience: "that the RN Voluntary Donation from Pay Scheme is picking up after a slow start."

A series of presentations is taking place around the country, seeking to make people more aware of this scheme and the help that is offered. The Admiral expressed his hope that the numbers donating to this voluntary scheme will increase significantly in the coming years.

The total share of the Voluntary Donation income in 2000/01 was £4,194.14, but the Trust looks to the future as numbers taking part in the scheme continue to grow.

The President praised "the magnificent voluntary work carried out by the caseworkers and almoners of a number of organisations including SSAFA, RBL and our own almoners."

He also thanked the Grants Committee made up of serving and retired sailors who give their time twice a week to assess the requests for assistance that arrive at a rate of 100 a week.

Pembroke House was mentioned as a particular success. It won first prize in a national competition for "Best project by a not-for-profit organisation."

This nursing home for retired personnel is full with a waiting list for places.

Efforts over the course of 2001 have continued to bring together the common threads of the numerous naval charities.

In June 2001, the RNBT, WRNSBT, RN & RM Children's Fund and RSR were brought together at Castaway House under the informal umbrella title, "Royal Naval Charities Castaway House".

This allows for greater co-operation and sharing of resources.

Each ship has been asked to nominate a RNBT representative to provide a link with the RNBT headquarters, and to act as a focal point within the ship.

The RNBT is keen that all ratings and other ranks should be aware of the charity and how it can help them and their dependants at times of need.

The Rock's inhabitants reach deep into pockets

BFBS GIBRALTAR acquired a massive £38,648 during their Wireless for the Blind Appeal.

A programme of sponsored events helped bolster the cash total. Everything from bed-pushes, bowling, water-skiing, and Beatlemania were potential sources of income.

A 'Hit Squad' mercilessly stalked its victims of custard pie deliveries. And the 'BFBS Gnome' followed key personnel around to keep the money coming.

The men of the Royal Navy also took the chance to dress up as women to wander the streets in search of donations.

Other cash was found by the sale of a variety of goods and services donated by local businesses and individuals.

BFBS describes itself as "overwhelmed" to break last year's total, and adds: "Thank you just doesn't seem to say enough."

Black Duke's heart of solid gold

DESPITE the hard work of Argonaut 01, the ship's company of HMS Monmouth pulled together almost £2,000 for charities.

The ship is affiliated to St Briavels Centre for Child Development in Monmouth.

In addition, the CPO's Mess ran a horse-racing night on board to gain £550 for Trengwath School

for Handicapped Children.

Not to be outdone, the PO's Mess ran a village fete to help the Charmwood School.

Further events include beard-growing, tombolas and haircutting.

Finally, almost 65% of those on board have signed up for Voluntary Deductions from Pay in support of Naval Charities.

News in brief

■ THE BAND of the Royal Marines Scotland have kept up their revival of the traditional charity concert in Dunfermline. Ticket sales made up £1,841.50 for the Dunfermline branch of the Riding for the Disabled Association.

■ THE ROYAL British Legion's 2001 Poppy Appeal is profiting from cycles and books.

A cycling quartet has gathered over £1,500 after pedalling from Canterbury to Leper in Brussels.

Team member David Goldin was in the Royal Naval Reserves and is a Green Beret.

The Fleet author, Peter Vaux, is also donating £2.50 from each sale of his book, 'Voyage to the Desert', to the Legion's appeal.

The book tells his personal experiences of a dramatic sea journey from Liverpool to Suez in the winter of 1940-41 on board the ship, City of London.

■ THE RNOCC Eastbourne have banked £1,190 for the King George's Fund for Sailors through a sponsored row from Newhaven to Eastbourne.

■ HMS ARCHER, the P2000 Patrol Vessel attached to Aberdeen University, paid a visit to her affiliated town of Stonehaven in north-east Scotland.

The 55 students and staff of the Aberdeen University's RN unit had taken on a range of activities through 2001 to support a local charity.

Their efforts yielded £250 for a closed circuit TV system to monitor the Kinkardine and Mearns Special Needs Play Forum play park, which had been targeted by vandals.

■ THE PAEDIATRIC Emergency Assessment Unit at Southampton General Hospital has benefited by £125 from the Royal Naval Engineers Bachelors Club, part of the Thunderer Squadron at Southampton University.

■ THE ROYAL Navy called on the Leicester Tigers rugby team to hand over a sponsored team strip to the rugby players from John Cleveland College in Hinckley.

This is the second year the RN has sponsored the team, committed to rewarding sporting excellence in schools.

Ben Ashfield, the first team captain from the college, has already passed the Potential Royal Marines course, and looks forward to joining the RMs later this year.

■ GOODIES for Christmas hampers were gathered together at HMS Collingwood for the local community elderly residents.

This has now become an annual event at the weapons engineering establishment, and all staff at the base were keen to contribute.

■ THE PT staff at HMS Nelson have pulled together to help a Portsmouth hospital after a local family lost their son.

CPOCA Snow lost his son Luke, aged 7, last year. Luke was being cared for at St Mary's Hospital in the Alton 3 Children's Ward.

The PT team organised a charity row on 15 January to collect money for a dedicated families room on the ward.

■ A TEAM of five from HMS Endurance are taking on 'the dirty dozen' during their time away.

Each team member will run a total distance equivalent to 12 marathons.

Between them all they will clock up 1,572 miles during the deployment, and each step of the way will gain a bit more money for the ship's charities.

■ A MORE local challenge has been set by Children's Aid Direct.

The charity is looking for men and women from the Royal Navy to climb 24 mountain peaks in just 24 hours.

This gruelling event, which will test stamina and willpower, is planned for May 2002.

For further information, contact 0118 958 4000, or www.cad.org.uk.

Jules rows to remind us all

LT JULES Stevenson of HMS Sultan has fulfilled a pledge and rowed his way to £960 for the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust.

Jules first came into contact with this charity when one of his division, the late LMEA Darren Barton, was diagnosed with cancer.

Jules asked how he could help, and as a result, set out to raise money and awareness.

Sadly, Darren lost his personal battle against cancer last year, but his widow, Julie Barton, and Darren's colleagues keep pushing to increase the number of bone marrow donors through improved awareness.

Jules row has won him a place in the British listings for Concept II rowing machines.

● Lt Jules Stevenson putting all his effort into raising awareness of bone marrow donation, supported by Cdre Peter Kidner, Commodore HMS Sultan.





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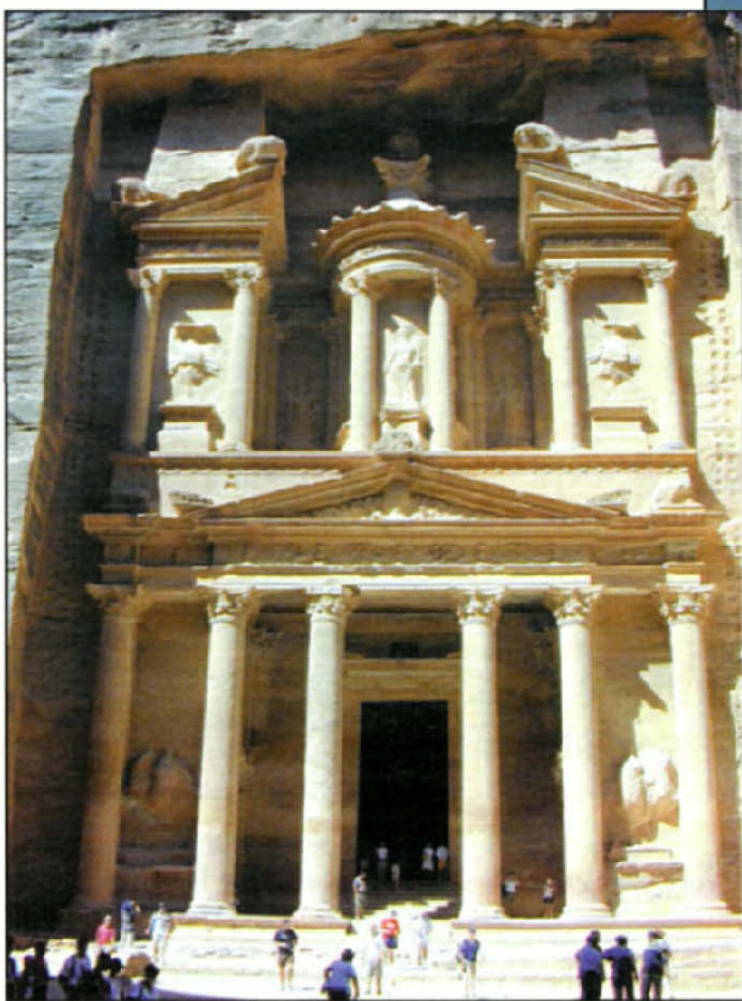
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● HMS Kent sails from the port of Aqaba, in Jordan, for centuries an important strategic location at the junction of major trade routes between Africa, Asia and Europe. Kent undertook manoeuvres with the Royal Jordanian Navy on sailing from Aqaba.



● The Treasury at Petra, which was visited by a large number of sailors from HMS Kent. In pre-Roman times Petra was the capital of a desert civilisation, which left massive monuments excavated in the rock.

● (Right) Temperatures have risen to 40 degrees C during HMS Kent's deployment, and beside sunbathing on the upper deck, the opportunity was taken to allow 'hands to bathe', when the ship stops dead in the water and the ship's company jumps in.



● HMS Kent sails through a typical glorious Gulf sunset.

NAAFI is a hot-spot

ONE of the busiest areas of the ship is the NAAFI shop, run by civilian Wayne Lindo.

The shop opens four times a day, seven days a week, and apart from selling items it is

also a useful source of information or rumour – the 'NAAFI queue buzz'.

Since leaving Portsmouth around six months ago, Wayne has taken more than £70,000 over the counter, selling around 40,000 bars of chocolate and more than 30,000 cans of drink.

Other items on sale range from snacks to suntan lotions, CDs and orders for flowers to be delivered to loved ones back home.

Although a civvy, the NAAFI manager is still an integral part of the ship's company, and while a shop manager in normal situations, his first aid training is brought into play as he assists the ship's medical staff in crisis.

Record in the bag – but Kent won't rest

THE ROYAL Navy's record-breaking Armilla ship HMS Kent is not resting on her laurels.

The Type 23 frigate started the New Year as she ended the old, chasing down and catching a sanctions-busting tanker in the Gulf.

A four-day cat-and-mouse operation began when the frigate's Lynx helicopter, scouring the Gulf for ships breaking United Nations sanctions against Iraq by carrying illegal shipments of oil, spotted a ship heading through Iranian territorial waters.

The MV Dana was following a well-used ploy by sanctions-breakers, so Kent's warfare team tracked the ship for two days and waited until the tanker strayed into international waters.

At that point the warship's

Royal Marines headed over in their high-speed boats and quickly boarded the smugglers' ship.

As a desperate last line of defence, the Dana's crew sabotaged their ship's engine, and despite the best efforts of the Royal Navy, it could not be resurrected.

But Kent was not going to give up so easily, so her Commanding Officer, Cdr John Clink, guided the frigate into a position ahead of the tanker and took her in tow to avoid her drifting into busy shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz.

The ship, with its cargo of 4,000 tons of oil – worth around £500,000 – was towed to the United Nations holding area in the Northern Gulf.

When they secured the Dana, Kent broke even more records.

She had already seized more illegal shipping than any of her predecessors by the time she took the Dana, and this incident took her into double figures.

It was also the longest chase, and the longest tow, reinforcing the message that Kent still means business.

But Armilla Patrol ships need to be versatile, as Kent demonstrated just before Christmas.

Her programme and tasking were suddenly changed when the US Navy asked for help in escorting on of their troop carriers through the Strait of Hormuz and into the Arabian Sea.

The British frigate was consequently operating under the flag of a US Task Group Commander, sailing at close quarters with the 17,000-ton USS Dubuque, an Austin-class amphibious transporter.

Kent has also welcomed a number of visitors on board, one of them being Rear Admiral James Burnell-Nugent, the Commander UK Maritime Forces and responsible for all British units in the region.

Admiral Burnell-Nugent toured the frigate, met the ship's company and was given an audio-visual presentation of the ships seized by Kent.



● The handover of Armilla Patrol ships is an important phase of a deployment – here HMS Northumberland (in the distance) relinquishes her duties back in the autumn. The two Type 23 frigates anchored in the vicinity of Ras al Hadd, Oman, and conducted a series of briefings in order to prepare Kent for the task ahead. Once the briefings were over, various items of stores and equipment were transferred by boat and helicopter, and the two ships parted company.

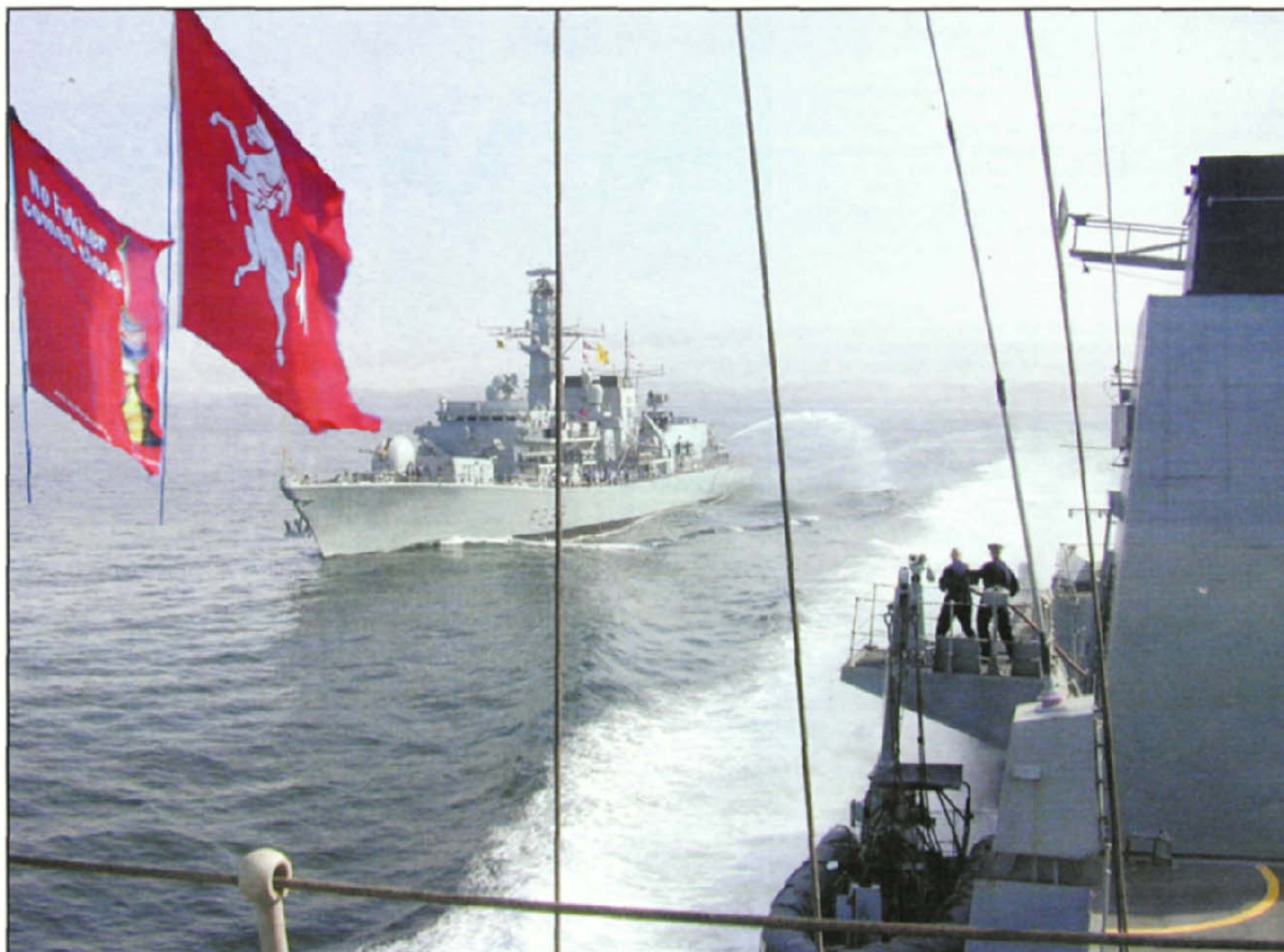
**More news from the Middle East
in next month's Navy News**



● Royal Marines swoop from the skies to seize the MV Ismael, an illegal smuggler. This was the ninth ship stopped by Kent, breaking the previous Royal Navy record.



● HMS Kent tows the Panamanian-registered illegal oil tanker MV Dana after the crew had sabotaged the engine as the warship's Royal Marines boarding party went into action.



● HMS Kent steams past HMS Northumberland after taking over Armilla Patrol duties.

Royals pounce under cover of darkness

A NUMBER of seizures by the boarding parties of HMS Kent have been made under cover of darkness, as shown here with the MV Habebah (top) and MV Ismael, in pictures from special imaging equipment.

The MV Habebah was the second tanker seized, in the first week of Kent's maritime interdiction operations (MIOPs), and set the pattern for future problems.

The Royal Marines detachment, led by Capt Paul Thompson, boarded secretly in the dark, and having determined the illegal nature of the cargo, the ship was directed to a holding area for further investigation.

But the determined tanker crew sabotaged the engines and steering systems, and as dawn broke the ship began to drift towards Iranian national waters – off-limits for the Royal Navy.

Rapid action was needed, so the team's engineers sprang into action, making running repairs and getting the ship under way again.

With MV Ismael, Kent had to make two boardings. The first was by a party rapid-roping from the ship's Lynx helicopter, but before they could break through the defences on the bridge, the tanker was heading for Iranian waters, and the Royals had to withdraw.

But Cdr John Clink played a waiting game – and six hours later, in darkness, the Royal Marines were back, and the chase was over.



Village fete is a popular diversion

ALTHOUGH patrolling the Gulf is a serious business, it is still important that the ship's company has a chance to relax.

Early on in the deployment a sunny Saturday afternoon was set aside for a village fete, which also had the benefit of raising money for the ship's charity, Demelza House.

The 'Bish', Rev Richard Ellingham, asked each mess to come up with an idea for a stall, and water played a big part in one of the most popular attractions, the slippery pole, as created by the Petty Officers' Mess.

Crazy golf was provided by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Mess, an obstacle course from Margate Mess, and apple bobbing and fishing from Sevenoaks Mess.

The Chiefs' Mess came up with a version of the TV "higher-lower" card game show, played with Naval ranks, while the Wardroom offered people the

chance to guess how many items were in the jar.

The event helped raise almost £500 for Demelza House.

Trips ashore are also popular when the frigate makes port visits, and one of the highlights on this deployment was a tour to Petra, where a walk through the Siq, a 1km narrow gorge, opens up to a spectacular view of the 40-metre high Treasury, carved into the rock around 2,000 years ago.

Back on MIOPs (maritime interdiction operations), HMS Kent has been supported in the Gulf by RFA tanker Bayleaf.

Pumping up to five tons a minute during replenishment at sea, the big British auxiliary is also expected to supply other warships of the task group and other friendly nations, and has been a familiar sight working in tandem with the John Ericsson, an American naval oiler of similar size.



● Action from the slippery pole at the ship's village fete.

Birds flock to bomb range

A ROYAL Navy bombing range in the far north of Scotland is proving a valuable breeding site for wild birds.

The range, at Cape Wrath in the north-western tip of Britain, is used periodically for bombing practice and naval gunnery shoots, but despite the presence of occasional bursts of high explosives, the local wildlife appears to be thriving – to the extent that, according to an independent report by Scottish National Heritage, the numbers of kittiwakes breeding there exceed most other sites around the UK.

Cdr Bill Jones, Staff Officer Regional

Breeding colony is most successful in UK

Activities to Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland, is responsible for an annual expedition to check the avian population of the steep cliffs and shoreline.

His conservation group includes MOD

officials and volunteers plus an ornithological adviser whose 'day job' is keeping RAF runways clear of birds.

Each year they co-opt the Swaledale Ringing Group, headed by Tony Crease, an ex-Army officer, to join Operation Auk and help ring the birds using long poles to snare them from cliffside perches.

"We obviously have to go when the birds are there and when the range is closed," said Cdr Jones.

"We have to concentrate everything into one week. We also take a botanist and an archaeologist; there are a lot of Viking settlements in the area, and we do this in conjunction with Scottish National Heritage."

Cape Wrath Range, is over 3,400 hectares, and almost a third of that is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Operation Auk is part of the Royal Navy's responsibility towards the environment and land management – Cdr Jones said if the bird count showed dramatic falls, steps would be taken to remedy the situation.

"We are very pleased with the way it's going," said Cdr Jones.

"Careful management ensures continued success of breeding colonies at the bombing range."

● (Left) An artificial raft for red-throated divers is launched into Loch Airigh na Beinne.

Cliffs support many species

THE CAPE Wrath Range stands in splendid isolation on the unforgiving north coast of Scotland.

A lighthouse built by Robert Stephenson almost 200 years ago stands more than 120 metres above the sea, and nearby are the ruins of Lloyds building, erected by the insurance group as a coastguard station decades ago.

Just east of Cape Wrath are the Clo Mor cliffs, the highest sheer

cliffs in Great Britain at over 280 metres, and home to thousands of sea birds.

And it is these colonies which the Navy is at pains to protect – species found at the range include fulmars, cormorants, shags, kittiwakes, guillemots, razorbills, black guillemots and puffins.

Some colonies are deemed of national importance, and some of international importance.



● (Above) Guillemots keep a close eye on proceedings as the ringing party moves into action at Cape Wrath Range.



● A razorbill sits in splendid isolation on the crowded cliffs at Cape Wrath.



● (Right) Looking west from the beautiful beach at Kervag, with Cape Wrath in the distance. The picture is taken from a cottage donated to the Scottish Mountain Bothy Association.



● The appropriately-named Sgt Jack Daw of the Staffords snares a bird to be ringed at Cape Wrath.

Audit reveals plant gems

AN AUDIT of plant life at Devonport Naval Base has uncovered a scarce variety – and confirmed that vegetation is thriving at the site.

The independent biodiversity audit, carried out in the autumn of 2000 and May 2001, concluded that the base "supports a significant diversity of terrestrial habitats, vegetation communities and species."

Of the 284 species identified in the survey, by Michel Hughes Associates, 14 are categorised as Devon Notable, and one – ivy broomrape – as nationally scarce.

Ivy broomrape (*Orobanchae hederaceae*) is a plant parasitic on ivy, and is restricted to the southern coastal areas of Britain.

Its location on The King's Hill in South Yard is a new record – as were the records of common (carrot) broomrape and autumn lady's-tresses.

The report also noted good examples of unimproved grasslands at Bull Point.

Naval base Nature Conservation Officer John O'Connell-Davidson believes the report proves that, rather than suffering in the industrial environment of the largest naval base in Western Europe, sympathetic use of the land has caused wildlife to flourish.

Some practices at the base will change as a result of the findings.

"We are planning to protect the biodiversity at Bull Point by reducing ground maintenance, because in some areas we could do without cutting the grass so often," said Mr O'Connell-Davidson.

"Too much maintenance means the wild flowers can't seed themselves properly."

He said the existence of such gems can be attributed directly to the ownership of the MOD – areas in the naval base have steep banks, with limited vehicular and pedestrian access, allowing the plants to grow undisturbed, and areas of the yard have no chemicals in ground maintenance.

Even some walls within the base win recognition because they "hold a diverse fern flora and recognisable vegetation community assessed to be of local nature conservation significance and the presence of Sea Spleenwort enhances their overall value."

The findings of the report formed the basis of recommendations on future management of the important habitats and improvements to the potential biodiversity of the base.

It is also intended that the findings form part of the base management strategy.

SPECIAL guest at the Royal Star and Garter Home's 86th birthday party last month was Dame Thora Hird.

She arrived at the Richmond home with representatives of the Lest We Forget Association, who put on an afternoon concert for the residents.

They took the opportunity to hand over Service memories to the Odyssey Timeship – the Home's current fundraising initiative launched in June last year.

Already several hundred Service records have been handed over to the Imperial War Museum for archiving, many of them contributed by veterans of the world wars and their friends and families.

But the search is still on for more contributions from Service men and women who may have seen action on some of the other battlefields of the 20th century. Equally important are the accounts of day-to-day life in the Armed Forces right up to the present day.

The archive will continue to receive entries until there is a full picture of the last 80 years of Service history.

For a cost of £10 stories (up

Window dedicated to Naafi hero (16)

A STAINED glass window to commemorate a local hero who helped recover the Enigma code books from U-559 has been commissioned in North Tyneside.

Tommy Brown, a 16-year-old Naafi canteen assistant from North Shields, was serving in the destroyer HMS Petard in October 1942.

With the ship's First Lieutenant, Anthony Fasson, and AB Colin Grazier, he dived over the side to board the U-boat, brought to the surface after a 12-hour attack. Fasson and Grazier handed over the code books to Tommy who climbed up the conning tower ladder to pass them on to the Petard's waiting seaboard.

He made two more descents into the U-boat, on the third one shouting warnings to Fasson and Grazier to come up as it was sinking steadily lower in the water.

But they left it too late – and both went down with the boat as Tommy fell back in the water and was pulled into the sea boat.

The code books were to provide the vital key to the cracking at Bletchley Park of the German Enigma cypher system – which in turn was instrumental in the Allied victory of the crucial Battle of the Atlantic.

Fasson and Grazier were each posthumously awarded the George Cross and Tommy was recommended for the George Medal. He never lived to receive it. To his intense disappointment was sent home as being below the minimum age for active service and he died attempting to rescue his sister in a fire at his home early in 1945. His George Medal was later presented to his mother at Buckingham Palace.

Now North Tyneside Veterans Committee in partnership with North Tyneside Council have commissioned the window, by Consett glass artist Maralyn O'Keefe, at the Saville Exchange Building, North Shields.

When they heard about the plan, Naafi at once offered to meet the costs. The window will be dedicated in the presence of Tommy's surviving brothers and sisters at a ceremony on Sunday, February 17, following a parade and march past up Howard Street.

Also attending will be representatives of the Royal Navy, the HMS Petard Association, Bletchley Park Trust and Naafi, together with the Mayor of North Tyneside and the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear.

Dame Thora gives veterans a big lift



to 500 words and including two photographs) can be sent to the Odyssey Timeship via the project website www.odyssey-timeship.com.

Alternatively, postal application forms can be obtained from Tony Maher, Odyssey Project Manager, The Royal Star & Garter Home, Richmond,

Surrey, TW10 6RR (tel 020 8439 8114).

Since it first opened its doors in January 1916, the Home has been devoted to the care of dis-

abled sailors and soldiers.

In 1918 airmen were admitted and finally in 1986 disabled ex-Service women.

No distinction is made

between those injured on active service or those disabled through accidents or illness in civilian life.



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MILITARY SALES



THE LAND ROVER EXPERIENCE

Film offers up challenge to new recruits

A NEW recruitment film for the Royal Marines is arriving at cinemas near you. This big screen drama sets out to question the commitment and determination of the viewer – have you got the strength of mind to finish the training? The challenge follows a raw recruit tackling the Royal Marines' assault course as part of his initial 30-week training.

The Royal Marines have the longest training regimen for any fighting force in the world. They are required to combine physical and mental strength, and the will to succeed is an over-riding priority.

The Marines' high-profile role in Operation Veritas against the Taliban and Al Qaeda has further increased their reputation in the UK. This new recruitment film is designed to ask potential Commandos if they've got what it takes to be a Royal Marine.

Brigadier Nick Pounds, Chief of Staff of Royal Marines, said: "The Royal Marines are looking for men with the mental determination to succeed in any environment."

"Their recent deployment in Afghanistan is just one example of the challenging environments they face."

He added: "This short advertisement is designed to appeal to these young men with that determination to succeed."

The film shows a new recruit taking on the tough assault course. His biggest challenge is the underwater tunnel. As the trainee struggles to find a way out, the viewers are asked to assess their own physical and mental limits under such extreme pressure.

The film aims to get young men to ask themselves serious questions about their own abilities and commitment before applying to become a Royal Marine Commando.

The basic message is that any would-be Marine must face up to his own limitations, and the fierce demands of this elite unit.

The gauntlet is thrown down to those who think they have the abil-

ity and attitude to succeed as a member of the best of the UK's fighting forces.

The Marines' infantry training course at Lympstone, Devon, is one of the most demanding in the world.

The final stage, the Commando Course, is a series of fitness and endurance tests, matched with military professionalism.

Only once this difficult challenge has been mastered can a Royal Marine wear the coveted Green Beret and Royal Marines Commando flash on his uniform.

Recruitment targets for Royal Marines are being met. This new film is intended to keep up the successful momentum of the version which has appeared on our cinema screens up to now.

For information on recruitment to the Royal Marines, call the hotline on 08456 07 55 55, or visit the website on www.rmjobs.co.uk.



● A Royal Marine photographed as a winning entry for the Royal Navy Student Award by LA(PHOTO) Burgess.



GOT IT?

Industry recognises Naval Air Squadron

THE TEAM at 702 Naval Air Squadron have received the Thales Orange Crop Trophy for 2000.

This award is presented to the crew or unit who are judged to have made the most significant contribution to the defence electronic database.

Lt Cdr Stewart Kilby, Commanding Officer of 702 Naval Air Squadron, was given the industry trophy at a ceremony at the squadron's

home base, RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset.

The Commodore of Naval Aviation, Commodore Chris Clayton, presented this mark of industry respect to Lt Cdr Kilby and his crew.

Lt Cdr Kilby told the assembled audience that he was delighted to accept the award in recognition of the dedicated hardworking staff on the squadron who strive to gain maximum operational benefit from every flight.

HMS Portland sets off on her first away mission

THE NEWEST frigate in the Royal Navy, HMS Portland, has headed off on her first operational deployment.

The Devonport Type 23 will spend most of her six-month stint away in the Arabian Gulf.

She'll keep up the British presence in the region and enforce UN sanctions against Iraq.

This will involve carrying out boarding operations on merchant vessels in the area to check for legitimate cargoes under the UN's "Oil for Food" agreement.

Portland has become fully operational within 13 months of her arrival at Devonport from the Scotstoun shipyard of BAE Systems.

The Commanding Officer, Commander Jonathan Handley described himself as immensely proud of the achievement.

He said: "To reach operational status in such a short time has only been possible through the dedication, professionalism and sheer hard work of everyone on board."

"Portland is ready in all respects for the challenges that lie ahead."

Tough lessons for Type 45 team



● A member of the Type 45 design team fights against the rush of water in the Damage Repair Instructional Unit at HMS Excellent.

THE NEED to get it right brought a group of Type 45 designers to visit HMS Excellent for two days in December to go through training in firefighting and damage control.

The team of 11 from BAE Systems Prime Contractor's Office and the Defence Procurement Agency's Type 45 Integrated Project Team experienced at first hand the difficulties of fighting to save a damaged warship.

In one of the lowest temperatures recorded, the team struggled to limit the freezing water pouring into their breached mess deck in the Damage Repair Instructional Unit.

Luckily the designers were warmed up the next day putting out raging fires at the Firefighting School.

This visit was just one of a series of trips to ships and establishments that will continue throughout the year.

All the lessons learnt will be factored in to the final design of the Type 45, ensuring that HMS Daring in 2007 will meet the real needs of the Royal Navy.

The Association of Royal Navy Officers

Patron Her Majesty The Queen

ARNO is both an officers' charity and a membership association which is open to serving and retired commissioned officers of the RN, RM, QARNNS, WRNS, and their Reserves. Formed in 1925, ARNO's primary purpose is to assist officers and their dependants in need with grants and bursaries from the proceeds of its assets, which exceed £3 million.

Today ARNO's 9,300 members are offered both financial and other advantages, the former very comfortably exceeding the annual subscription (£10 per annum or £150 for life).

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For membership application form, please complete the following:

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Please send me details and a membership application form:





Healthy future in medical branch

THIS month's Drafty article looks at some current medical branch issues.

However, it begins with a general comment that applies equally across all branches concerning leadership courses.

Leadership courses

Leadership course criteria are explained in Chapters 3 and 4 of BR 1066 and DCI RN 20/01 and 113/01.

As a reminder, it is now a requirement to have completed a leadership course before promotion to Leading Rate (LRLC) and Petty Officer (POLC).

Now that promotion is dependent upon passing the relevant leadership course, places on such courses are at a premium (particularly special leadership courses).

Accordingly, Divisional Officers must ensure that ratings are ready in all respects to undertake their course. There are too many instances of late cancellations due to lack of preparation.

Lead Service for Medical Technical Career Employment Groups

Medical Technicians across the Services were subject to lead service arrangements, where one Service was responsible for recruitment and provision of a particular specialisation to all three Services.

For the RN the groups affected were Pharmacy Technicians, Physiotherapists (now Army-led), Radiographers and Lab Technicians.

After several years of this arrangement the RN will again assume responsibility for the provision of some technician specialisations.

Medical Technician numbers in the RN have reduced to meet the new operational requirement.

However, there remain considerable opportunities for personnel wishing to undertake training as Radiographers, Lab Technicians and Environmental Health Officers (EHO).

It should be noted that EHOs are to become an all-officer cadre and there is considerable potential for radiographers and lab technicians to do likewise.

Anyone wishing further information should contact, via his or her Divisional Officer, SOT(M) in Institute of Naval Medicine (INM) Alverstoke ext 68033.

The Commando Medical Assistant (MA)

It remains very difficult to achieve full 'commando trained' MA manning within the RMC.

That said, the introduction of a RM Medical Assistant (RMMA) has seen a steady flow of Royal Marines undergoing MA training and working within the Corps.

The result of this and other initiatives is that medical support to the Corps enjoys the highest percentage (60 per cent) of green

berets in recent memory.

In addition to those already serving there are eight currently on course with a further seven awaiting a training place.

The outcome is that service with the Marines, as a black beret, is now at a premium.

The future for RM medical support looks increasingly good, but with one sour note concerning the apparent unwillingness of RNMAAs to sit their PPE for RMMA2.

This means that MAs who sit and pass their PPE at the earliest opportunity overtake many good men in the promotion stakes.

Divisional Officers are strongly urged to encourage their RNMAAs to seize the opportunities and progress.

A full and comprehensive PPE learning schedule is available on INM's Medical Branch Ready Reference CD available from WO(MA) Chamberlain in INM ext 68094.

Medical Assistant (Submarines)

Never has there been a better opportunity to be a MASM.

A current shortfall in branch numbers, primarily at the senior LMA/junior POMA levels, is a consequence of many factors including PVR and normal TX.

Importantly, it is also because the medical branch manager is determined to offer the same opportunities to MASMs in branch transferring for nurse or technician training, and to return to general service for ODP training or general drafting opportunities outside the Submarine environment.

As a result, MASMs are meeting the challenge of being given increasingly greater responsibilities and promotion earlier than normal expectations.

Medical Assistants (General Service)

There have never been greater promotion opportunities for Medical Assistants.

All MAs who have passed their LMAPQC and LRLC are either in, or about to be drafted to, an LMA post.

The same is even more apparent for POMAs. The message is clear - pass courses and exams and promotion will follow swiftly!

As well as better promotion prospects, there are new billets opening up all the time.

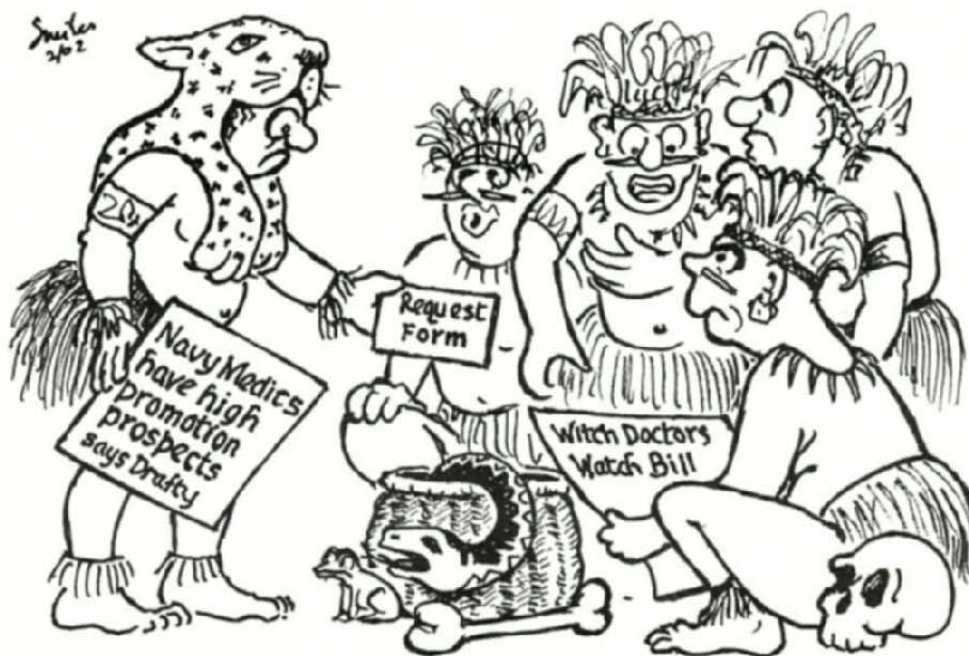
For example, there are new jobs for POMAs on the waterfront, there is a post opening in Cyprus for an LMA and, of course, there are many new opportunities for service in the Centre of Defence Medicine in Birmingham, RH Haslar and Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth, and MODHU Derriford.

In summary, the pace of change and the emergence of re-structured and refocused Royal Navy Medical Services presents increasing opportunities for training, promotion, and interesting and challenging work for Medical Branch ratings of all specialisations.

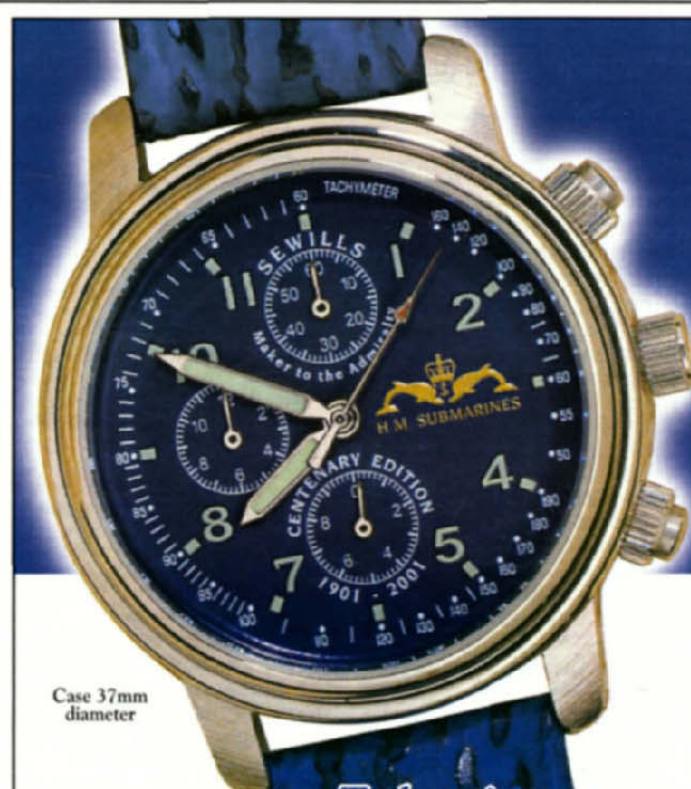
■ Opportunities exist for able rate Chefs and Stewards to transfer to the Submarine Service with full career prospects up to CPO level (as Coxn) and beyond (in General Service).

Billets are available both in Devonport-based and Faslane-based submarines. Applicants should be under 35 years old and medically fit for SM service.

Volunteers should apply on Form C 241 which when completed should be sent direct to Commodore Naval Drafting. Full details can be found in BR 8748 Chap 4.



'He wants to smack in for sideways entry to MA Branch, Chief!'



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Situations Vacant

THE NAVAL Drafting Division seeks five volunteers to fill watchkeeper shore jobs at RNU St Mawgan at Newquay, Cornwall, with immediate effect.

The first is for a CPO(SSM)(O) or a CPOACMN or CPO(S), and the PQ number for this job is 45.

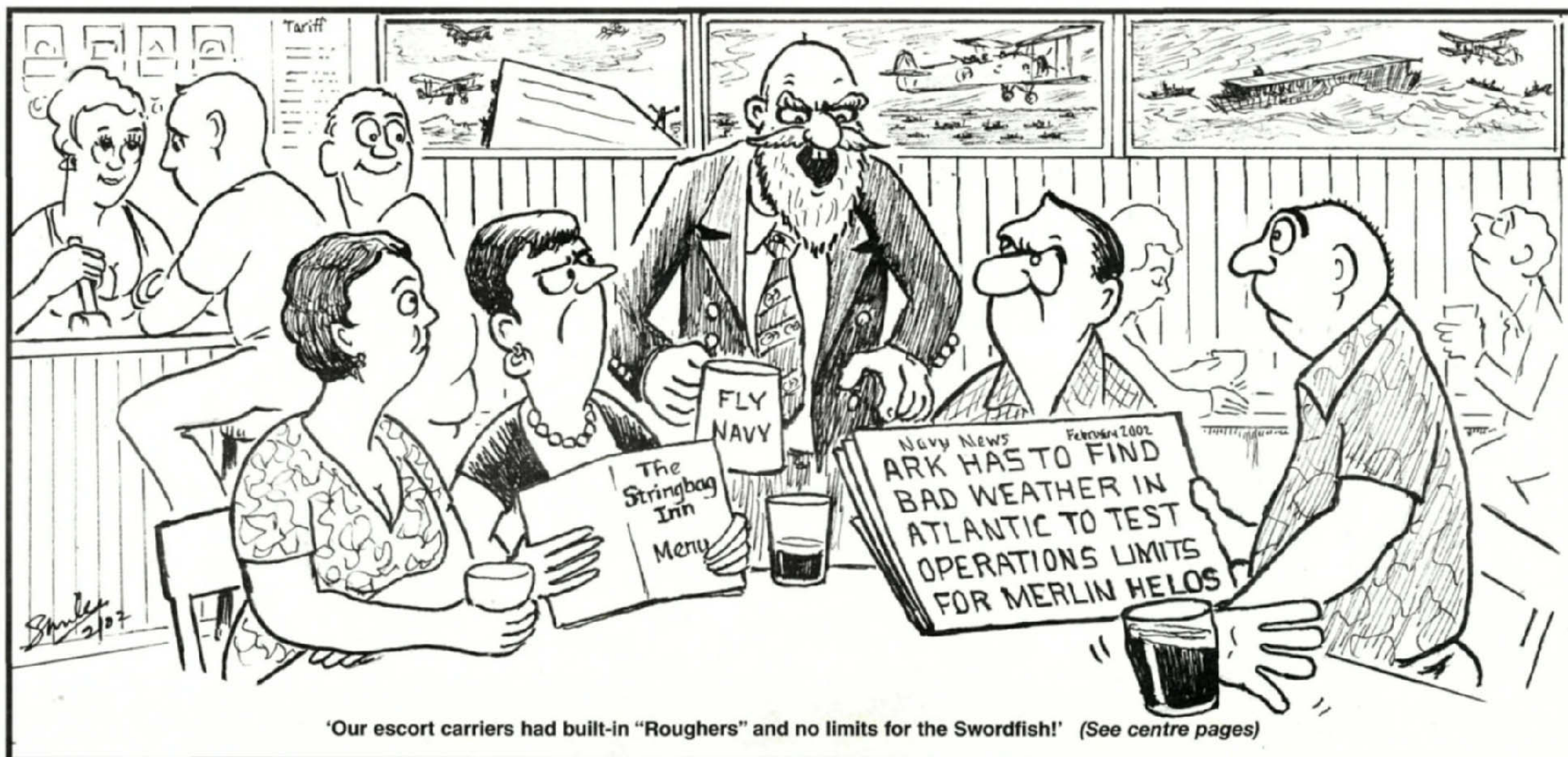
Next is an opening for an OM(UW)1 or LOM(UW) or LOM(SSM), for which the PQ number is 68.

Third is a requirement for an OM(SSM)1 or LOM(UW)1 or OM(UW)1, and the appropriate PQ number this time is 71.

The next opening is for an OM(SSM)1 or LOM(UW) or OM(UW)1, and the PQ number in this case is 76.

Finally an LRO or LRO(G) is needed - the PQ number is 79.

General rules for volunteering apply in all cases.



NEWSVIEW

Shackleton's vision

TWO of the finest films of the festive season were the first part of J. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* saga and the television dramatisation of Shackleton's Antarctic expedition of 1914-16, said to be the most expensive ever produced for Channel 4.

Both are tales of epic endeavour against all the odds that have touched a deep emotional chord at the present time – but the second one, though it constantly stretches and strains credibility, happens to be true.

Today, the way Shackleton sustained his team of 28 men through many months of appalling hardship as they struggled to survive after their ship was locked and finally crushed by the pack ice in the Weddell Sea, is held to be a classic example of leadership and is frequently cited in management studies.

His particular qualities in this regard were shown early on in the TV film. *Endurance* did not start out as a happy ship; leaving ahead of him on the voyage south, when she arrived in Buenos Aires the crew, in the words of his biographer Roland Huntford, were "disloyal, insubordinate and drunk".

This situation, Capt Thomas Orde-Lees recorded confidently "will all be put right when Sir Ernest arrives, thank goodness" – and so it was.

For the next two years Shackleton – an RNR officer – and his party would have no contact at all with the outside world, so that they had no idea of the progress of the war.

It says much for his stature and the times he lived in that even his country's enemies were concerned about his fate – as the Channel 4 documentary, repeated last month, made clear. (The Kaiser was a particular fan – following an earlier expedition, for which Shackleton was knighted, he had summoned him to Berlin for a private audience and lecture).

It is not likely, to put it mildly, that our current antagonists, the perpetrators of global terrorism, would share the same sentiment in similar circumstances.

Because for his followers, Shackleton's great redeeming virtue was that he would never risk sacrificing them to further his personal ambition – enormously powerful though that was. His overriding view was that his people came first.

Unlike *Lord of the Rings*, his story does not dwell in the realms of fantasy – though there was a mystical element to his personality, which also strikes a chord among 'New Agers'.

He wrote in his own book of the expedition, *South*: "I have no doubt that Providence guided us, not only across the snow-fields, but across the storm-white sea that separated Elephant Island from our landing place on South Georgia."

"I know that during that long and racking march of 36 hours over the unnamed mountains and glaciers of South Georgia it seemed to me often that we were four, not three."

His companions on that march, Frank Worsley and Tom Crean, had confessed to the same idea – and the story would be picked up in countless sermons, tracts and revivalist meetings in the 1920s.

It also inspired some lines in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, so that Shackleton acquired another form of immortality in the most famous poem of the age. It was written about the time he died, on board the *Quest*, anchored off Grytviken, South Georgia, on his final expedition in 1922:

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
– But who is that on the other side of you?

KING Harold had a girl's name on his chest. Winston Churchill and his mother had a snake and an anchor between them...

Tattoos turn up on the most unlikely places – and people – as a major exhibition at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich will demonstrate when it opens on March 22.

Though they have bounded back into general fashion lately – among women in particular – they are mostly associated with sailors. In fact, Captain James Cook's voyages to Tahiti first brought the word tattoo, as we know it, to the English language.

Taking these Pacific voyages as its starting point, *Skin Deep – a History of Tattooing* will trace its popularity among seamen in the 19th and 20th centuries to its current status as a fashion accessory in mainstream society.

Skin deep – a history of the tattooist's art

The exhibition will display important objects from the Museum's collections, from popular paintings and drawings by Parkinson, Hodges and Webber, to items from the Museum's rare books collection that have never been on public display. There will also be a number of key objects on loan from public and private collections.

The exhibition will be

divided into three sections. The first will focus on the Europeans' encounters with tattooing in the Pacific, including the first descriptions of the process; the relevance of the tattoo in Polynesian societies; and the response of British sailors to different types of tattooing.

The second section will examine the way tattooing became popular amongst

merchant seamen and Royal Navy sailors and eventually with groups on the fringes of society.

The final section will look at the tattoo as an increasingly acceptable fashion statement, and at the contemporary vigour of the Pacific tattoo traditions that first inspired the Navy's sailors more than 200 years ago.



● Sydney Parkinson, one of the official artists on Captain Cook's first voyage of discovery, made this engraving of a Maori chief, showing his decorative tattoos

– National Maritime Museum



● 'An Ancient Custom' – an engraving from the Graphic, March 20 1890. From the Collection of Lionel Titchener, British Tattoo History Museum, Oxford

Commodore takes to the rooftops

THE FINISHING touches to RNAS Culdrose's new hangar roofs were completed by the Commanding Officer of the naval air station, Commodore Chris Waite.

The roofs of the hangars at RNAS Culdrose have been refurbished in a major programme.

Almost 30 hangars stand at Culdrose, bearing the full brunt of the Cornish weather.

The roof of each one has to be maintained in a good state

to make sure that the vital stores and equipment held within are kept in the best condition.

The task of maintenance of all the buildings and hangars at Culdrose falls to the Property Management Department.

Neil Grosse, head of the team, said: "Keeping the base weather tight and functioning is a challenge."

"However, our recent projects will give Culdrose a sound infrastructure for many years to come."

● Up on the roof of W6 hangar, Cdre Chris Waite rolls the seam of the final roofing sheet, assisted by Ross Williams of B&W Roofing.



Joined up warfare

THE ROYAL Navy's first fully integrated Maritime Warfare School has been launched at HMS Collingwood by Rear Admiral Peter Davies, the Flag Officer Training and Recruiting.

It marks a new era in naval training, with the eventual collocation of the School of Maritime Operations from HMS Dryad and the School of Leadership and Management from HMS Excellent with the School of Weapons Engineering and Communications at HMS Collingwood.

A spokesman said the new concept, under which warfare training will be fully integrated both ashore and afloat, would greatly enhance the Navy's operational capability, particularly for high readiness ships.

Work has already begun in preparation for the changes ahead with the opening of part of the Leadership Training element of the Leadership and Management Department.

This follows the development of the Mantle Hall Close Support Weapon Gunnery Simulator which was installed at HMS Collingwood following the closure of the RN Gunnery School at HMS Cambridge.

Work is also in progress to provide a state-of-the-art bridge simulator for navigation training at the end of the year.

This sophisticated piece of training equipment will be able to recreate the experience of any warship in any weather condition anywhere in the world.

The creation of this new Maritime Warfare School has been named Project 'Warspite' after the famous battleships of World Wars I and II and the more recent submarine.

■ Special feature in next month's Navy News.

New man flies in to BRNC

DESCENDING from the skies in one of 824 Naval Air Squadron's newest Merlins, Commodore Tony Johnstone-Burt arrived at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) in early January to take up command.

Cdr Johnstone-Burt joins BRNC straight from sea. He flew back from South Africa having just completed the West African half of a South Atlantic deployment as commanding officer of HMS Montrose and Captain of the 6th Frigate Squadron.

He says his main ambition for the college is to ensure that the cadets get to the sharp edge of service as soon as possible.

"Coming straight from the front line I want to get the young officers out to sea as soon as I can."

"I see my role as creating and educating the future leaders of the Royal Navy and the nation."

He was warmly welcomed by the departing Commodore Mark Kerr, who said: "My time in command at the College has been a great privilege. Both my wife Lou and I will look back at our time here in Dartmouth with great affection."

Cdre Kerr in turn donned the flying helmet to be whisked aloft. He moves on to promotion as Rear Admiral and will take up the appointment of Naval Secretary, in charge of naval manpower.

Norfolk sails for multinational role

TYPE 23 frigate HMS Norfolk has left Devonport for a six-month deployment with other NATO ships in the Standing Naval Force Atlantic (SNFL).

Norfolk relieves destroyer HMS Exeter in the seven-strong force, which follows a programme of patrols and exercises unless called on by NATO to join an operation.

The other ships of the group are currently drawn from the navies of the Netherlands, Portugal, Norway, Spain, Germany and the United States, and during her deployment Norfolk is expected to visit most of the European countries of the SNFL navies.

This is the second time in three years that Norfolk has joined the SNFL group - in 1999 she spent six months in it before being deployed to Sierra Leone for diplomatic, security and humanitarian operations.

The ship was awarded the Wilkinson Sword of Peace for her work in West Africa.

It is also a familiar task for her Commanding Officer, Cdr Richard

Talbot, who commanded sister ship HMS Grafton as part of the same force last year.

Norfolk has just completed a docking period, trials and a comprehensive sea training package to prepare for the SNFL deployment.

But before setting off, sailors on board made sure that life would be that little bit more comfortable for patients in a Plymouth hospital ward that shares the same name as the Type 23.

Each time anyone from the ship's company made use of the minibus that operates around the Devonport naval base, a bit more money was added to the kitty.

All these trips back and forth have amounted to almost £1,000 which will go towards providing equipment such as fans, CD players and a television set for the Norfolk ward in Derriford Hospital.

This largesse from the frigate's crew will help improve the lives of everyone connected with the ward, whether patient, visitor or staff.

Midwifery Sister Annette Burkinshaw said: "It's tremendous what the ship has provided."

"It really will make a difference for the patients and staff because

the ladies will be more comfortable, and we will have sonic aids to carry out more assessments, so that means mums will have less time to wait."

As part of the SNFL Force, Norfolk will take part in a series of NATO and national exercises designed to maintain readiness and interoperability.

Up to ten destroyers or frigates can be attached to the Force for a period of six months, with command rotating on a yearly basis between all the contributing nations.

60 years on for Cornwall loss

ON APRIL 5, 1942, the two County class cruisers HMS Cornwall and HMS Dorsetshire were sunk in the Indian Ocean by Japanese aircraft.

The 1,000 survivors of this attack spent 29 hours in the water before being rescued by HM Ships Enterprise, Paladin and Panther.

Cornwall had headed off to the 'China station' after commissioning at Chatham in 1939.

She only returned to the UK twice before her loss. Her final visit was a return to Simonstown for a refit in December 1940.

By March 1941, she was back in the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean on patrol and convoy duties.

The present HMS Cornwall has recently served in the area where her ancestor sank the German commerce raider Pinguin in 1941.

This year will see the last annual reunion for the Cornwall (1939-42) Association.

Memorial plate given to quiz winners

THE FAMILY of the late Lt Cdr Alistair Stewart visited the Starboard crew of HMS Vigilant to see the presentation of a commemorative plate in memory of their son.

The ship's company decided that a silver plate would be awarded to the winning team in the ship's company quiz which is held during patrol.

This regular presentation will be an ongoing memorial to Lt Cdr Stewart. He served as the Deputy Marine Engineering Officer on board HMS Vigilant, but was killed in a climbing accident in May last year.

His mother, Mrs Peggy Stewart, presented the plate accompanied by her husband, Malcolm, and their daughter Katherine.



● Peggy, Malcolm and Katherine Stewart, the family of Lt Cdr Alistair Stewart, with the winning team of HMS Vigilant's ship's company quiz.

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Merlin tested to the limit Foul weather

FOUL weather was the key element of the latest trials which tested the Navy's state-of-the-art helicopter to the limits.

And to meet the criteria, aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal went deep into the Atlantic to ensure the Merlin aircraft could be tested under the most exacting of conditions.

Having completed a £147 million refit and upgrade last August, Ark Royal is now the first of the Navy's three carriers which is fully configured to operate the anti-submarine Merlin maritime patrol helicopter.

As part of the package undertaken at Rosyth, in Scotland, Ark Royal's flight deck was strengthened – and reinforced anchor points added – and the hangar was altered to cope with the new aircraft.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas Ark Royal sailed from Portsmouth on a Ships Helicopter Operating Limits (SHOL) trial, which defines the weather limits in which the Mk 1 Merlin can fly safely from an aircraft carrier in all weathers, day and night.

The trial requires a Merlin to make approaches and landings to the ship in a variety of different configurations, and also tests the limits required for various deck motions and sea states.

The carrier's Navigating Officer, Lt Cdr Jerry Kyd, said: "Basically we were looking to push out the operating limits for wind and sea states for Merlin."

"To do that we had the freedom go wherever we wanted in the North Atlantic."

"There was a running joke on board that we would end up in the Bahamas or Bermuda, but we never quite managed that."

In fact, much of the work was carried out off the Azores – but it meant a pretty uncomfortable

● (Left and below) A Merlin trials helicopter pictured during an evening test sortie.

Picture

able time for the ship's about seeking the right

"Basically, every Commander Air would and they would let us know the weather they wanted."

"We would then talk and decide where the best

That happened even often requiring a 300-mile to 30 knots overnight – confined some of the le their bunks as the carrier to 800 miles out into the

With the occasional indicated oil tanker, RF clocked up around 7,500 – the equivalent of a vo

The weather objective with conditions varied and no wind to sea and 50 knot wind deck.

The trial was conducted by QinetiQ – formerly the Research Agency – from a research facility at Boscombe Down.

QinetiQ and its predecessor have been conducting SHOL trials since 1990. The Wasp was cleared to operate from the deck of a Tribal-class frigate.

Techniques used to be refined over the years, but the SHOL trials undertaken by the Portuguese, Brazilian and

The Ark Royal trials involved RN pilots, one RN of engineers and nine ground crew.

Trials were carried out by HMSO1, side number 2.

This particular machine built for the Royal Navy have been used extensively.

ZH832 is specially fitted with more than £1 million of carrier was fitted with flight deck movement.

"The trials aircraft was fitted with a comprehensive suite of instruments and sensors, which were interrogated in real time by the flight test engineers."



● Ark Royal's flight deck operating limits trials

on HMS Ark Royal

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ZH832.

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was fitted with a compre-

mentation that could be

on board the aircraft by

ers operating the aircraft

mission console," said QinetiQ trials manager

Tony Dyer.

"This information was also digitally recorded

for post-flight test analysis."

ZH832 has flown more than 320 hours in this

test role, and has been used to carry out previ-

ous ship helicopter operating limits trials on

Type 23 frigates and the RFA aviation training

ship Argus.

The Ark Royal trial required 775 deck

approaches and landings, and almost 80 hours of

flying, with the ship's Aviation and Air

Engineering departments lending extensive sup-

port to the programme.

There was also a requirement for search and

rescue cover during the trials, which was provid-

ed by a Sea King helicopter and crew from 771

Naval Air Squadron at RN air station Culdrose.

Upgraded Invincible-class ships have nine

designated landing spots for the Merlin, and all

nine spots were tested during the trials, which

involved 25 sorties, three of which were at night

For the first fortnight of the trial, Ark Royal

also embarked a Merlin from the newly-formed

814 NAS, based at Culdrose in Cornwall.

Their experiences will make a significant

contribution to the tactical development of the

helicopter, while the intensive work carried out

by the flight deck teams and supporting depart-

ments is invaluable training and experience for

when Merlin is fully operational on the carrier.

Results from the operating limits trials will

form the basis for all future operations from

Invincible-class carriers - and the trials con-

firmed what many people already believe, that

the Merlin is shaping up to be a star performer.

"The results from these busy and successful

trials show that the Merlin is a capable aircraft

that will be very important for future Royal

Navy operations," said Tony Dyer.

Future tests are planned for the Merlin with

RFA vessels, in particular auxiliary oilers and

auxiliary oil and replenishment ships.

● (Right) Trials simulated all aspects of

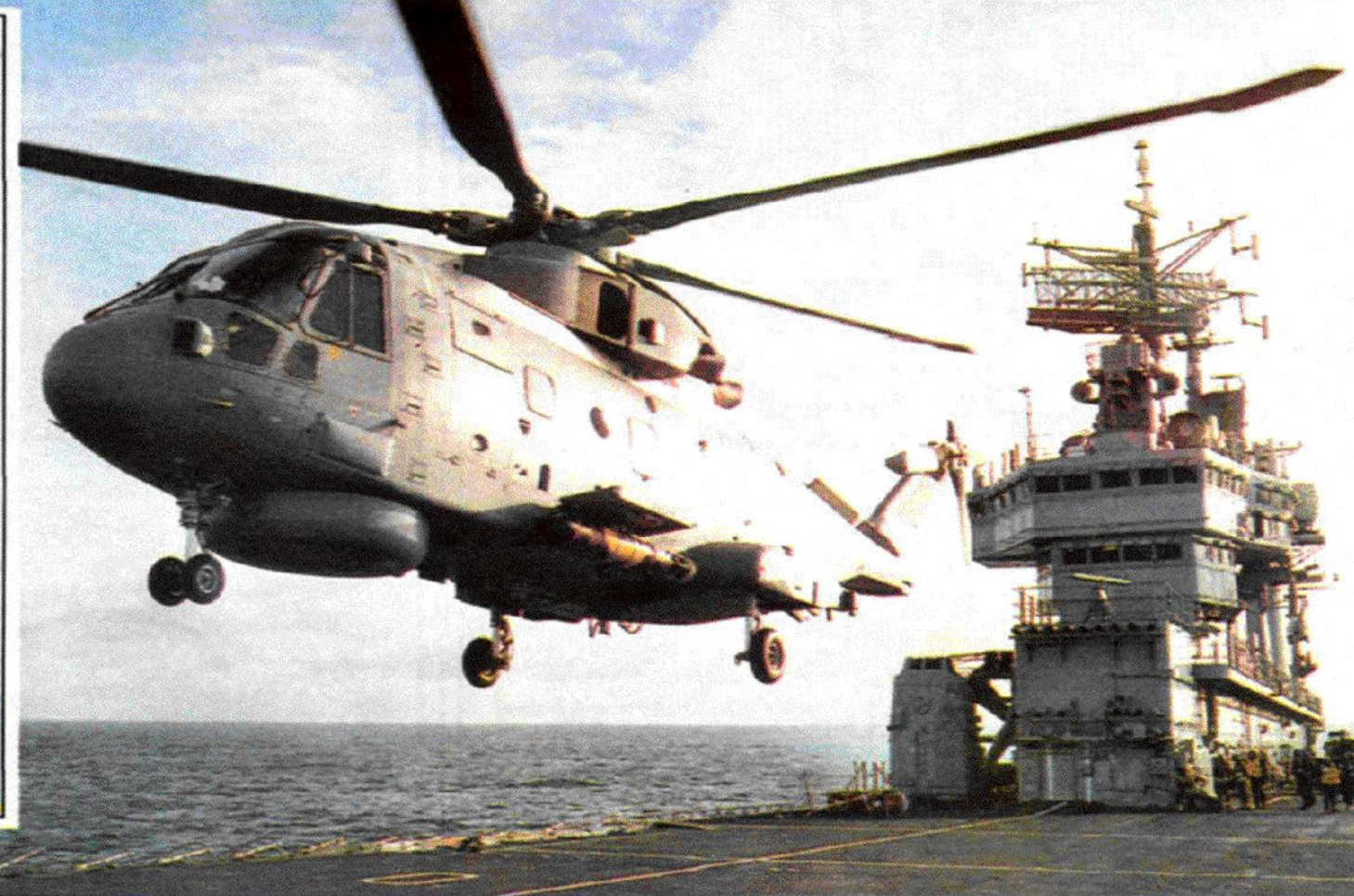
Merlin's future operations - here a man is

winched up to the Merlin.

● (Below right) A Merlin tests one of the

landing spots forward of the

island on HMS Ark Royal.



at deck crew attend to a Merlin during ship helicopter

trials in poor weather in the Atlantic.



At Your Leisure

STRINGBAG SORTIE



Fairey Swordfish torpedo bombers of the RN Historic Flight at RN air station Yeovilton are featured in Hood and Bismarck (Channel 4 Books £20), David Mearns and Rob White's book of the TV documentary series shown in December 2001.

The Bismarck's fate was sealed when a Swordfish from HMS Ark Royal dropped a torpedo that smashed into the starboard quarter of the ship, permanently jamming the steering.

Order out of chaos in the air

The Fleet Air Arm Handbook 1939-45 (Sutton £25) is billed as "the most comprehensive review available of the Royal Navy's air power during the war years".

At the outbreak of hostilities British naval aviation was in a chaotic state. While the design of aircraft carriers had rapidly advanced, there were few naval aviation and maintenance personnel, few naval air stations and no high-performance naval aircraft.

So the Fleet Air Arm was initially heavily dependent on RAF personnel, and signing up was compli-

cated, often taking several months. But as the war progressed the FAA soon became an essential force in the fight for victory and its huge success was one of the war's major achievements.

Author David Wragg starts with a brief history before starting a full war diary of all the major operations.

He describes the different functions of the FAA, to protect the essential supplies brought by merchant ships, and their close support of sea and ground forces, both from carriers at sea and bases ashore.

In-depth analysis reveals what life was like in the Fleet Air Arm then – the food, accommodation, training, activities, uniform, and the relationship between aircrew and their shipmates aboard the Royal Navy's carriers.

Each squadron, wing and carrier air group is listed along with their operations and locations, while individual chapters are devoted to the squadrons, carriers, aircraft and bases used, detailing their specifications and operations, supported by a wide range of photographs and diagrams.

Appendices carry battle honours, medals and awards.

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Heroic Princess

THE HEROIC efforts of Alice, Princess Andrew of Greece (Penguin £8.99) – mother of the Duke of Edinburgh – as a nurse in the Balkan Wars that immediately preceded World War I are recounted by Hugo Vickers in what for several newspapers was a paperback choice of 2001.

In World War II, during the German occupation of Greece and while her son was on active service with the Royal Navy, Princess Alice sheltered fugitives from the SS in her home in Athens, where she elected to remain, organising and working in a soup kitchen which gave priority to hungry children. She was several times interviewed by the suspicious Gestapo.

In 1993 she was given a posthumous award as 'Righteous among the Nations' by the Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem.

The cover portrait of Princess Alice, who died at Buckingham Palace in 1969, was painted by Philip de Laszlo in 1907.



At Your Leisure



Vanguard the white elephant

WITHOUT doubt HMS Vanguard, with her flared bow, forward sheer, towering superstructure and raked-topped funnels, was the most handsome battleship ever built for the Royal Navy.

In 1939, when plans were first mooted for the construction of this one-off vessel, no one could have foreseen the demise of the battleship as the Navy's capital ship.

Nevertheless, in September 1945 when World War II ended and Vanguard was still languishing in the builder's yard, there were those who thought that she was already a white elephant, and that she would prove to be a liability.

In the age of nuclear weapons and fast aircraft carriers which would soon be flying off jet aircraft with speeds of over 500 knots and ranges of up to 950 miles, what role could the battleship have?

When, in 1946, Vanguard was eventually commissioned, she was

given a prestige role – that of a 'Royal yacht'. It was the illness and subsequent death of King George VI which prevented her from keeping the role in the years that followed.

Perhaps because she never had occasion to fire her guns in anger, little has been written about her – but now Neil McCart sets the record straight with HMS Vanguard 1944-60 (Maritime Books £19.95).

● For three hours during the afternoon of May 3, 1949 Vanguard fired her main armament at a target on the Filfa gunnery range off Malta. In this photograph Y turret provides an awesome display of fire-power

Roughers!

Built of glass reinforced plastic with most of the hull out of water, the Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessels are notoriously lively in a seaway. Here HMS Atherstone is seen in the Channel in a photograph used to illustrate our December 1993 'Ships of the Royal Navy' slot – and now featuring in Roughers, an album of warships fighting the elements compiled by Mike Critchley and Steve Bush (Maritime Books £14.95)



ScreenScene

– by Bob Baker

End of an era for old-style effects

In *Harm's Way*, by James Bassett, a tale of the US Navy during World War II, was a great, thumping best seller of 1963, specially popular with travellers: seven or eight hundred pages could see you across a good deal of territory, even in the early 60s.

Inevitably the movie version followed (1965) and is currently available on video. Historically, its plot takes us from just before Pearl Harbour to just after the Battle of Midway. Dramatically, it encompasses the jockeying for position among the top brass, tortured father-son relationships, a full ration of mostly doomed romances and a cast of characters which includes so many neurotics, alcoholics and incompetents that it takes John Wayne, at his most massively heroic, to provide effective counterbalance.

The film still works as entertainment. It's basically a melodrama, which means that characters are rewarded or punished according to their various virtues and defects. Since defects, in this story, are so much to the fore, it's no surprise that practically everyone's dead by the close of proceedings.

The cast is full of old Hollywood stalwarts – Wayne, Kirk Douglas, Henry Fonda etc – all acting without make-up, as a concession to realism.

The battle scenes are interesting. Clearly the ships are models, but unusually big – about the size of row-

ing boats, apparently – and detailed. Like the film as a whole, they're impressive without being in the least convincing.

A. D. Flowers, a special effects maestro who died a few months ago, didn't work on *In Harm's Way* though he did supervise the destruction in a more lavish reproduction of the Pearl Harbour attack, *Tora! Tora! Tora!* in 1970.

His area of expertise was the simulation of gunshot effects and all kinds of mayhem in general. Remember the scene in *The Godfather* in which James Caan is riddled with bullets while waiting in his car at a toll-booth? That was a Flowers special, as was the wreck of the liner at the beginning of *The Poseidon Adventure*.

His passing coincides with a conspicuous falling-off in demand for the kind of service he provided. When we see, in *Tora! Tora! Tora!*, an extra running for dear life, with the blazing fuselage of an exploded fighter cartwheeling along just behind him, it's not absolutely clear whether we're watching a brilliantly executed stunt or an almost lethally mismanaged one.

But it's for certain we're watching film of an actual event, and not a computer-generated fantasia. Now, for better or worse, it's the work of the computer artist rather than that of the special effects pro which is up there on the screen.

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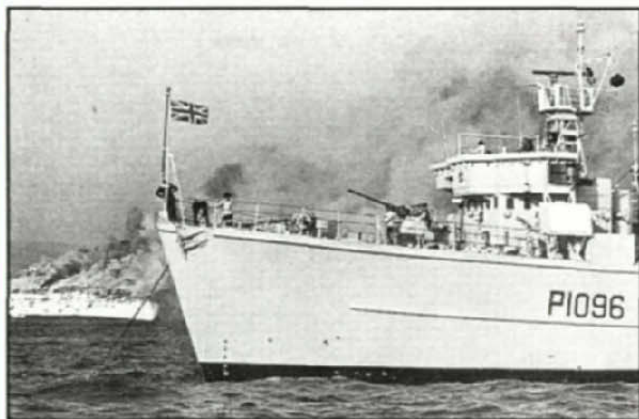
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NoticeBoard

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES



● Sailors on HMS Yarrnton watch the demise of the former Cunard liner 'Queen Elizabeth' in 1972.

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the February headlines of past decades...

40 years ago

The frigate HMS Londonderry rushed to help an Italian liner in fiery distress.

Londonderry was in Puerto Rico on the last leg of a three-month deployment along the west coast of North America and visiting various Caribbean islands, when she received news that the MV Bianca C, was ablaze in Grenada.

The frigate headed off to Grenada at speed to find the 17,000 ton Bianca C gutted by fire and sinking.

The 600 passengers on board had already been safely disembarked, but the fire had become uncontrollable, with two of the liner crew members losing their lives.

Londonderry then towed the unwieldy Bianca C away from the big ship anchorage.

In six hours they managed to cover just three miles before the Bianca C heeled over and sank in a cloud of steam.

30 years ago

Following a £2 million refit, the former Cunard liner 'Queen Elizabeth' renamed 'Seawise University' also came to a flaming end.

More than 1,200 people had been toiling to convert the ship to her new role since her arrival at Hong Kong in July 1971.

But fire swept through the liner, and within hours she was reduced to a burnt-out shell.

HMS Yarrnton and others from the Sixth Mine Counter-measures 'Dragon' Squadron were called out to help – but the blaze was so fierce that they were forced to stand off and watch the end of a grand old lady of the seas.

20 years ago

Two Sea Kings from RFA Engadine saved 28 people from the blazing freighter Melpol. The six man team from the RFA brought the major fire under control.

Queen's New Year Honours

Royal Navy – New Year's Honours List 2002:

KCB – Vice Admiral Jonathon Band

CB – Rear Admiral Christopher David Stanford, Rear Admiral Rees Graham John Ward

CBE – The Venerable Simon Jefferies Golding QHC, Capt (now Cdre) David Andrew Harry McGregor Smith ADC

OBE – Cdr (Acting Capt) Ross Albon, Lt Col William Andrew Canning RM, Cdr (Acting Capt) Malcolm John Darley Farrow, Cdr Stephen Walter Garrett, Cdr (now Capt) Christopher Bryan Neave, Cdr William Kenneth Ridley

MBE – WO(WTR) Philip Edward Carter, Cdr (now Acting

Capt) Peter Charles Chapman-Andrews LVO, WO(WTR) Roger George Collings, Lt Cdr Peter Frank Cooper, WO(RS) Peter Ronald Evans, Lt Cdr Richard Forrest Evans RNR, Capt (now Major) William Fergusson Hannah RM, Lt Cdr Jon Andrew Lawler, WO(D) Anthony Austin Lawrence, Lt Cdr Gordon Lindsay, WO(WEA) Roland Francis Lock, Lt Cdr Frank Nowosielski, Lt Gordon Ian Ronaldson, WO(R) David Kenneth Rowles, WO(MEM) Garry Edward Smith, Lt Cdr David Vernon Stanton, Lt Col Philip Anthony Wilson RM

QVRM – Cdr Susan Margaret Passmore RD RNR

Appointments

Cdre R. S. Ainsley to Fleet Waterfront Organisation (Portsmouth) as Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla on 11 Mar 02.

Cdre A. J. G. Miller to continue as Commodore Amphibious Task Group Sea and to be appointed aide-de-camp to HM

The Queen on 30 Nov 01.

Cdre A. J. Rix to Fleet Waterfront Organisation (Devonport) as Commodore Devonport Flotilla on 11 Mar 02.

Cdr M. T. G. Durkin to HMS Exeter as CO on 12 Mar 02.

Lt Cdr T. I. Chrishop to HMS Guernsey as CO on 8 Apr 02.

Deaths

Rear Admiral George A. Thring. Served: Hawkins, St Vincent, Velox, Lupin, Norfolk, Deptford, President, Tavy, Pembroke, Forth, Ceylon, Victory and Terror. First DSO awarded as convoy escort commander in the Battle of the Atlantic as CO of Deptford. Second DSO awarded for command of Ceylon during the Korean War. Flag Officer Malaysian Area 1956-8, August 98, December 15.

Cdr Richard Compton-Hall. Served: Ambush, Minnow, Springer, Saker, Grampus, Dolphin and Ashanti. Made MBE for taking Grampus under the Polar ice cap. Former director of RN Submarine Museum in Gosport, December 12.

Cdr Michael Parker. Australian. Served RN 1937-46. Served in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Pacific in WWII. Ships include Lauderdale, Wessex. Served with Prince Philip on convoy duty patrolling 'E-Boat Alley', the east coast of Britain. Remained friends with the Prince and became his Private Secretary 1948-57. Aged 81, December 29.

Eynon Hawkins GC. Served through WWII. In January 1943, on board MV British Dominion as a seaman gunner when the ship was struck by three torpedoes. Men abandoned ship. Hawkins led the main group of swimmers away from blazing oil, and swam back twice to rescue other survivors. Won the Albert Medal (translated to George Cross in 1972) for his courage and leadership. Aged 81, December 17.

David Stewart Smith, ex CPO SA. Served at RNAS Culdrose, Gibraltar. Served from 1964 for 22 years. Aged 55, August 5.

John David 'Smudge' Smith, ex PO SA. Served on HMS Hermione, Brilliant, Brave, RNAS Culdrose and Raleigh. Served from 1983 to 2001. Aged 34, December 4.

Bob Perry, ex Leading Stoker Mechanic. Member of Fast Minelayers Association (Northern). Served HMS Manxman. Aged 65.

Arthur Fletcher, ex AB. Survived the loss of HMS Laffrey in March 1944. November.

Ken 'Bogie' Knight. HMS Saumarez, Captain (later Admiral) Manley Powers' valet. December 18.

Richard Spencer, ex LEM. Ships include: Royal Arthur, Collingwood, Peacock, Bellerophon, Peacock Association. Aged 71, November 28.

Gordon Bown. Orestes; Algerines Association. September 28.

Joseph McGarry. Jewel, Pincher; Algerines Association. October 14.

Dr Robert Kenneth Reid. Spanker; Algerines Association. October.

Victor Rose. Plucky; Algerines Association. October 26.

George Marley. Rattlesnake; Algerines Association. October 6.

Tom James Fisher. Cadmus; Algerines Association. November 14.

Lou Plum, ex Chief Mechanic. Joined HMS Faulknor 1939. Other ships include HMS Hornet and MTBs. HMS Faulknor Association. November 30.

Robin 'Bob' Bush, ex Fleet Chief Aircraft Mechanician. Served 1947-75. Ships: Ark Royal (NAS 809), Theseus. Air stations: Falcon, Simbang, Fulmar, Condor, RAF Honiton and Leuchars. Founder member of Angus Branch, FAA Association.

Jim 'Taff' Probyn, ex AB. Arctic Convoy veteran, HMS Opportune Association. December 8.

Marcus 'Mark' Allen, ex Chief MEA(H). 1952-1989. Aged 71, November 15.

David Hoult. Seaman branch (radar). Ships include: Wakeful, Whitsand Bay, Loch Killisport, Sheffield, Tenby. Served 1950-59. HMS Tenby Association. October 20.

Eric 'Rick' Rixson, ex LSM. Served 1948-58. Joined HMS St Vincent from TS Mercury. Served on Wrangler, Montclair, Vernon, Chameleon, Magpie and Warrior. November 15.

Bernard J. 'Cherry' Harmer, ex Telegraphist. Vice President HMS Ladybird (Sasebo Japan 1950-53) Association. December 7.

Robert Broadbent, ex Stoker 1st class. Served 1943-46. Ships include Venomous, Cygnet, Towy and Ocean. Aged 76, November 12.

Alan Willmott, ex CPO Caterer. Served 24 years, retired in 1976. Aged 65, December 24.

Portsmouth Field Gun Crew

Did you run for Pompey in the 90's? IW Reunion July 12-14 2002.

Formation of 'Pompey Young Guns Club' Interested?

e-mail: realpompeygunner@doubledoors.fsnet.co.uk

Or write to Box NN007, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH



● Veteran Tom Webber tells Sub Lieutenant Alex Bingham from HMS Northumberland about his time spent building the Burma railway as a prisoner of war. Picture: LA Phot Sean Clee, HMS Drake

Remnants of Burma nightmare

RAILWAY track and sleepers from the notorious wartime Burma Railway have been offloaded from a Royal Navy frigate in preparation for their inclusion in a new national monument.

The 30 metres of track and sleepers were put on HMS Northumberland while the Type 23 frigate was visiting Bangkok in Thailand for a Defence Industry Day, when ten UK companies displayed equipment for more than 100 visitors.

The ship returned home from her Gulf and Far East deployment just before Christmas, but the track was put ashore in January under the watchful eye of David Childs, Director of the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire.

It will eventually form a unique tribute to the suffering and endurance of those who worked on the so-called 'Death Railway', as well as others who were held as prisoners-of-war in the Far East.

Members of the ship's company of the frigate took the chance to visit the railway while they were in Thailand, and also took in the Bridge over the River Kwai.

Back in Devonport to watch the

offload of the track and sleepers were five former prisoners-of-war who had been forced to work on the railway.

Said one of them, Steve Cairns (83), who was in captivity for three years and is now Welfare Officer of the Far East Prisoner of War Association: "Seeing this knocked me for six. I just visualised all the people who died."

"Never in all my wildest dreams did I think that over 55 years later I'd be touching these again."

Mr Cairns was awarded the OBE in the current New Year's Honours List in recognition of his support for his fellow prisoners-of-war.

The National Memorial Arboretum was conceived as a living tribute to the wartime generations of the twentieth century.

Planting began in 1997, and the Arboretum has plots and groves for the armed and merchant services, the police and fire services and other groups and individuals.

Swop drafts

CPOWTR Beale. Contact: 9380 27706. Draft: Neptune 12 Mar 02. Will swop for: any Portsmouth or London draft.

MEM(M)1 N. Plumbley. Contact: 9380 23464 SFM(P) MACCO. Draft: Westminster 15 Apr 02. Will swop for: Ark Royal.

LOM(MW) Barton. Contact: 93255 3533, HMS Neptune. Draft: Hurworth. Will swop for: any single role.

LWTR David Price. Contact: UPO SCU 93825 2484. Draft: Illustrious 4 Jun 02. Will swop for: any carrier deploying; all other enquiries considered.

LSTD Braddock. Specialist: First Aid trained. Contact: 9380 26617, FOSF. Draft: Ocean 1 May 02. Will swop for: any Portsmouth ship deploying or not.

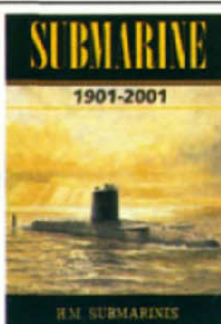
LCH Giles. Contact and draft: Cumberland, BFPO 216. Will swop for: any Devonport ship, preferably not deploying.

WWTR Lawley. Contact: Drake UPO,

9375 67542. Draft: Invincible May 02. Will swop for: any Plymouth, Portsmouth ship or squadron deploying.

OM(AW)1 R. J. Stainforth. Contact: 07810 842551. Draft: Newcastle, now to Serp 02. Will swop for: any Type 42 or carrier not deploying.

Ratings seeking to swop drafts must meet the requirements of BR14, article 0506. In particular, they should be on or due the same kind of service – sea or shore; have time to serve in their current draft; be the same rate; and be of similar experience. All applications must be made on Form C240 to NDD, Centurion Building.



Last year saw the Royal Navy's submarine centenary and to celebrate that milestone, WARSHIPS IFR has published a special edition (£8.50 + P&P). The 52 page A4 book is packed with 101 superb images of British submarines, from the early Holland Class boats to nuclear-powered vessels of today and tomorrow. Specially commissioned articles tell the full story of RN submarines in action from 1901 to 2001. For further details about this exciting publication contact us via the WARSHIPS IFR web site or at the address below.

HPC Publishing, Drury Lane, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN38 9BJ, United Kingdom.
TEL: 00 44 (0)1424 720477 FAX: 00 44 (0)1424 443693
www.warshipsifr.com

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At Your Service

Reunions

February

TS Steadfast's 90th anniversary will be celebrated on February 16 with a reunion dinner at TS Steadfast, Thameside, Kingston-upon-Thames. All old boys and staff welcome. Contact David Broch on 020 8546 6600.

March

West Country Association of RN Writers reunion dinner at HMS Drake on March 2. Anyone who has ever worn the Writers' Star - including ladies - most welcome, with partner. Details from D. Jewell, 35, Broad Walk, Saltash PL12 4NT, tel: 01752 843416, email: westwriter@aol.com

Fast Minelayers S.E. Branch will meet at noon in the RBLC, Braganza St, Kennington, on March 4. New members welcome. Ring 01603 437652 or write to Ray Moore, 89, Watling Rd, Norwich NR7 9TG.

HMS Loch Fada 1944-67 reunion, Stretton Hotel, Blackpool, March 15-16. Wives and sweethearts welcome. Details from Bob Harris, tel: 023 8039 1848 or email: bobharris@btinternet.com

Plotting and Radar Instructors Association Matapan Dinner at the WO & SRs mess, HMS Dryad, March 16. Contact Paul Phillips, 023 9228 4233 or Caroline Denny 023 9228 4423.

HMS Glory Association reunion and AGM, Trecam Hotel, Babacombe, Torquay, March 22-25. Details from B. Skam, 15, Tenfellers, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1TH, tel: 01371 873106.

RNKS (East Angles) reunion at 1200 on March 24 in the Shipwreck, Shottley Marina (old Enright Block, HMS Ganges). Details from Peter Brooke, 7, Penn Close, Capel St Mary, Ipswich IP9 2UE, tel: 01473 310189.

HMS Wizard and HMS Cadiz Association AGM/Reunion March 25-28 at the Home Club, Portsmouth. All commissions, ranks and rates welcome. Details from Tom Fox, Maroheto, Church Lane, Meriden, Coventry CV7 7HX, tel: 01676 523296.

HMS Nuthatch Association reunion at Charnock Hotel, Skegness, from March 22-25. This is a date correction. Details from Harry Haskell, 7, Eldestford Drive, West Parley, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 8GN, tel: 01202 890017.

April

HMS Cossack Association (L03 and D57) 1938-1959 reunion at Burlington Hotel, Eastbourne, from April 5-8. Details from Geoff Lilley on 01473 682836 or see website

at <http://www.hmscossack.freeserve.co.uk>

HMS Cornwall (1939-42) Association final reunion at the Home Club, Portsmouth, from April 2-5. Memorial service in the morning of April 5, reunion dinner in the evening. Details from John Fuller, 109, Margaret Rd, New Barnet EN4 9RA, tel: 020 8449 0590.

HMS Hermes Association reunion, Royal Fleet Club, Plymouth, from April 4-7. Details and new membership contact Bob Welch, 2 Hope St, Bozeat, Wellingborough NN29 7LU, tel: 01933 663229.

HMS Cumberland Association reunion at the Glastonbury Hotel, Royal Parade, Eastbourne, from April 19-22. Attendance by membership only. Membership details from Sam Watson, 01634 235861, email: sam@samjam.demon.co.uk alternatively to Hazel Draper on 01322 523438.

480 Kings Squad RM reunion at the Home Club, Portsmouth, April 22-24. Details from Len Holmes, 57, Jones Lane, Hythe, Southampton SO4 6AW, tel: 023 8084 2284, or Peter Hodges, 11, Goffton Ave, Gosham, Portsmouth PO6 2NG, tel: 023 9237 5621.

HMS Euryalus Association are again invited to join the Fusiliers Association (Lancashire) for the Gallipoli Weekend Celebrations at Bury on April 27-28. Details from Eric Owen, 82, Hoath Park Drive, Cardiff CF14 3QL, tel: 029 2075 0022.

HMS Whitesand Bay Association reunion at the Home Club, Portsmouth, on April 30. Details from Geoff Nightingale, 268, Galleys Hill, Gadebridge, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 3LD, tel: 01442 263405.

May

HMS Eagle Communicators reunion, Hotel Mon Ami (tel: 01305 786917)/RNA, Weymouth, on May 3-5. Contact Chris Howard, 47, Winterbourne Close, Hastings TN34 1XO, tel: 01424 422045.

LCG & F Association reunion, Home Club, Portsmouth, May 7-9. Contact Vernon Copeland, 82, Clifford Bridge Rd, Binley, Coventry CV3 2DZ or tel: 02476 451645.

HMS Bigbury Bay Association reunion at the Midland Hotel, Bournemouth, from May 10-12. Details from David Ditcher, 17, Alison Crescent, Whitfield, Kent CT16 3LN, tel: 01304 827109.

HMS Decoy Association welcomes shipmates from the last commission 1967-70 to a reunion at the Best Western, Queens Hotel, Portsmouth, May 10-11. Contact Al Singleton, 42, Uplands Crescent, Fareham PO16 7JY, email: Al@Single42.fsn.net

HMS Figgard, Series 12, May 1951 Entry reunion on May 10 at the Home Club, Portsmouth. Enquiries also welcome from

other ex-apprentices in Figgard at the time. Contact John Stupples on 023 9266 2778 or email: john.stupples@ntlworld.com

HMS Impregnable Association reunion at Chatham on May 17-19. If you were a boy seaman on Impregnable, contact Mary or Fred Haycock on 0121 532 6141 or email: mhaycock@supanet.com for details.

HMS Volage 1944-45 Crew - report for reunion at Lakeside, Hayling Island, from May 24. Contact Lofly John Mills on 01243 542158.

June

Commemoration of Limbang Raid, Brunel, 1962: A one-off reunion is planned for the ship's companies of HMS Fiskerton and Chawton and of Lima Co, 42 Cdo, plus associated arms, in June at Blackpool. Contact Peter Down, 5, Shaw Moor Ave, Stalybridge SK15 2RB, email: AVOCAQA@aol.com

HMS Highflyer 1945-62: GZH/GZP Ceylon West calling! Ex-Highflyers contact John Ginge Wingett for news. First reunion in June at the Home Club. Spouses welcome. Contact John, 35, Mundays Row, Horndean, Hants. PO8 0HF, email: john@jaying.freeserve.co.uk

HMS Tattoo and HMS Pique, 40th MSF 1943-47 reunion on June 4-5 at the Home Club, Portsmouth. Contact Arthur (Joe) Rue, 30, East Drive, Blunsden Abbey, Swindon SN25 2DP, tel: 01793 724490.

HMS Kemerton 1962-63: 40th anniversary of the 62-63 commission at Kemerton Village, Gloucestershire, between June 7-9. Contact Pancho Brett, 14, Marquis Gardens, Barby Dun, Doncaster DN3 1DX, tel: 01302 863331 or email: Brett.Pancho@talk21.com

HMS Liverpool Association reunion on June 8 in HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. The members of any of the ships companies, of any commission, and of any rank or rating, are invited. Details: John Waters, 2 Dewberry Rd, Wordsley, Stourbridge DY8 5XJ.

HMS Brecon L76 reunion in Blackpool on June 14. First and second commissions 1942-45, also any crew or ex-crew of the present HMS Brecon (M29). All welcome. Contact Phil Rogers on 01628 624740.

HMS Euryalus Association reunion and AGM at Bridlington with the Combined Ex-Services Association Reunion from June 14-16. Cruiser and frigate shipmates welcome. Details from Eric Owen, 82, Heath Park Drive, Cardiff CF14 3QL, tel: 029 2075 0022.

HMS Glamorgan, Falklands reunion in the Home Club, Portsmouth, on June 15. Details from Jess James, 50, Lancaster Way, Northampton NN4 8LY, tel: 01604 660401 or email: jessjames@cwcom.net

HMS Solebay reunion, Southwold, Suffolk, commemorating the Battle of Solebay and the 40th anniversary of the ship paying off for the last time. Contact Malcolm Clarke, 164, Southmead Rd, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS10 5DR, tel: 0117 9622500 or email: solebay@btinternet.com

HMS Pheasant reunion at Sinal Warren, Hayling Island, from June 21-24. Contact B. Doeding, 1, Dymchurch Close, Clayhall, Ilford IG5 0LB, tel: 020 8924 9159.

523 & 524 Recruit Squads, RM reunion, June 22 at Home Club, Portsmouth. Contact George Chandler on 023 9241 2895 or Don Pimp at 92, Pound Rd, East Peckham, Tonbridge TN11 5BJ, tel: 01622 871573.

August

HMS Cardiff (Falklands 82 Ops Branch) reunion in Cardiff, August. Contact Steve Paxton on 01405 817947.

HMS Actaeon, South Atlantic 1946-53 reunion at Leicester Senior Service Club, August 9-11. Contact George (Ginger) Brandon on 0116 267 3755.

HMS Eagle Survivors Association 1942 final reunion at the Home Club, Portsmouth, on August 17. Details from A. Goodenough, 3, Brompton Rd, Reading RG30 3HY, tel: 0118 957 3783.

HMS Stalker/809 FAA Squadron reunion, August 17 at Waverley Hotel, Pedley St, Crewe CW2 7AA, tel: 01720 256223. Contact Jeop Holmes, Olde Rectory Cottage, Packington Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire, Warwickshire B46 2QP, tel: 01675 463327 or D.C. Roberts on 01782 561052.

until April 1944, when he joined LCI(L) 174. Contact Alan at 124, Broom Hill Rd, Rochester ME2 3LG, tel: 01634 721884 or email: garden@tesco.net

HMS Aubretia: The late George Edward Sand served in the Flower-class corvette HMS Aubretia during WW2. His son is in the process of making a model of this vessel and seeks detail of the hull paintwork during 1942-43. Contact Ron Sand, 40, Bromfield Lane, Mold CH7 1JL, tel: 01352 759492 or email: ronsand@ic24.net

At your Service entries

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Navy News on tape

Navy News is available free of charge on tape from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type.

For more details, contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message on the answerphone with a contact telephone number. No special equipment is required to play the tapes, which are standard 90-minute cassettes.

Calling Old Shipmates

800 & 820 NAS: Jan Rich would like to hear from anyone who knew him in the 1950s. Contact him on 0117 967 9372.

RFA Landfall Association: This new association seeks ex-members of the RFA including RN, RNSTS, Royal Corp of Logistics who have all had close ties with the RFA. Contact the Secretary, RFA Landfall Association, PO Box 120, Hexham, NE48 1XA.

HMS Beachampton, Hong Kong, 1981-84: Seeking Steve Peach, Tony Flood, Steve Ingham, Key Thomas, Scouse Campbell, Tom Worth, Jonny Knock and John Foster to name but a few. Also LEPs who may have taken up UK residence. Time to reunite the Beachboys. Contact Jan Davey, 50 Antony Rd, Torpoint PL11 2JR, tel: 01752 816059.

HMS Heythrop: Organisers of a church service are trying to trace former crewmembers of this destroyer sunk in 1942. To invite them to this service held in St Nicholas Church, Heythrop, at 3pm on March 20. Contact Bob Parfitt on 01494 882420.

HMS Atherstone: Seeking Richard Connelly (Billy) with whom James (George) Brock served between 1986-89. He was a minesweeper op in HMS Atherstone. Richard was best man at James' wedding but over the years they lost contact. Contact James at 17, Carrae Drive, Glenrothes, Fife or email: iv010a0075@blueyonder.co.uk

HMS Tartar 1944-45: Dennis Russell seeks news of former messmates Bernard Sambrook, Frank Cooney and Tommy Berry. Also HMS Royal Artillery Telegraphist Course 1943, Class 286. Also Ivor Reynolds, of Ludlow. Last contact in Colombo, serving with a Combined Ops Unit. Contact Dennis, Over Aries, Top Cottage, Whaiphill, Newton

Stewart, Wigtownshire DG8 9NZ, email: Brusselsprout@btopenworld.com

Maureen Walker: Seeking old friends who recall Maureen, especially Sadie Edney (used to be Conlon) - last seen Portsmouth, 1987 - or the old gang from Eastney Barracks or Malta. Contact Maureen Corbett, 2981, Tree Top Rd, Dacula, GA 30019, USA, email: cmccord@accessgenesis.net

Seeking junior rating **Peter Hone** with whom Mark (Bobby) Houghton was in the Navy in 1980, based at HMS Raleigh, class intake Frobisher 27. He is from Exmouth and lived at St Andrews Rd, Contact Mark c/o 2, Fairless Rd, Eccles M30 0HR, email: houghtonfamily26@cwctv.net

Fez Phelan (ex-Royal Engineers) seeks George Nesbitt and Dave (Big George) who both served in HMS Sutherland, in the Falklands Sept 96 - Jan 99. Contact Fez at Ruta Pablo 119, Urb El Tosal, La Nucia 03530, Alicante, Spain, or email: fezmiki@prysma.es

Seeking news from anyone **joining Navy Nov 46/47**, HMS St George, HMS Imperuse, Stoker training ship: Sharky Lyones, Lofly, Chunky Grover, HMS Constance, Hong Kong 49-51, Tyrian reserve fleet 47-48 and Aegian 52-53. Contact Frank Webb, 204, Ashcroft Rd, Ipswich IP1 6AF, tel: 01473 401743 or email: frank.webb@btinternet.com

HMS Trumpeter: Tony McEnery's uncle James Stewart, of Liverpool, was an AB on this escort carrier in WW2. He died aged 19 in an accident on July 26, 1945, en route to the Far East and was buried in Coochin but later reburied in Chennai/Madras. Does anyone remember the circumstances in which he died - his younger sister would like to

know. Contact Tony at 120, Allerford Rd, West Derby, Liverpool L12 4YJ, tel: 0151 228 1723, email: memphislim6@hotmail.com

The wife of **Paul Rab Butler** seeks Kevin Harris, with whom Paul did his baby divers course with around 1984-85. She would like to keep this a surprise, so could Kevin contact her at jane.butler@harpermacleod.co.uk or on 07753 802698.

HMS Illustrious - Falklands 1982: Martin Insall seeks the EW Department for a reunion - Lt Cliff Eagles, CPO Pete Morton, PO Pete Cook, LS Pete Godwin, LS Kevin Freestone, AB Lee McEvoy, AB Adam Bailey, AB Mick Leahy. Contact Martin at 7 Lampeter Ave, Drayton, Portsmouth PO6 2AL, or email: the.insalls@msn.com

Nick (Sue) Lawley seeks anyone who knew him from joining at HMS Raleigh in 1983, training at HMS Mercury and service in HMS Fearless and Bristol and FOST Commcon. Contact Nick at 22, Gelderland Entrance, Stratton, Western Australia 6056, email: nlawley@btown.com.au

HMS Leander: Lez Kellett seeks Tom Dooley (Martin) - they both served in HMS Leander, from 1981-84 - or anyone else who remembers him from Leander, RNSPT (84-85), or FSU Rosyth (85-87). Contact Richard Kellett, 6, Scott Rd, Stevenage SG2 0BZ or email: lezkell@btinternet.com

Greg Miller seeks **Jason Hemmings**, last known of in Invincible. They served in the Army together before he defected! Greg needs him and his wife to be godparents to his children. Contact Greg at Seidler Strasse 16, 68789, St Leon-Rot, Germany or email: miller@jcc.nato.int

David Fenton wants to hear from anyone with whom he served from 1953-64. He did sea training on HMS Indefatigable then served in HMS Vanguard, Tyne, Wakeful, Cossack and Yarron as well as Whale Island, HMS Terror and Mull of Kintyre. Write to David at 3463, Ashcroft Crescent, Mississauga, Ontario, L5C 2E6, Canada, or email: dfenton@home.com

Ian Packwood 1962-1974: Served St Vincent, Collingwood, Yarron, Lochinvar, Cochrane, Hampshire, Keppel and Rapid. Seeks anyone who remembers him - write to 121, Redwood Ave, Melton Mowbray LE13 1UF, email: iarpack@hotmail.com

HMS Scarborough: Seeking mess mates from Comms mess during 1969 to 1971. Contact Tony Attie on 01895 431833.

OPERATION PEDESTAL, AUGUST 1942. Given enough support, a lunch is proposed to be held at Trinity House on September 16th 2002, to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of this epic voyage to Malta. Members of the ships' companies involved and supporters of the proposal should respond to: **Box NN006** (Navy News).

Osborne request

A CUSTODIAN of Osborne House on the Isle of Wight is seeking any information about the naval college period between 1903 and 1921.

Dave Gallop said: "Visitors to the house often enquire about their relatives who were Naval cadets."

"After their training at Osborne they then went on to Dartmouth."

"I am collecting information about the cadets who were at the college so that I might be able to pass this on to their relatives."

"While Osborne Naval College was open, two future kings and four princes were trained here;

they were King Edward VIII, King George VI, Prince George of Kent, Prince George of Battenberg, Prince Louis of Battenberg (Earl Mountbatten of Burma) and Prince Charles of Belgium, along with nearly 4,000 other cadets.

"I would like to hear from any relatives who could help me with information about the college - written evidence, magazines or photographs - which could be loaned and/or copied."

Write to Dave Gallop at 'Hisakura', 22, St John's Road, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 2RN, tel 01983 614139.

Over to You

HMS Bulwark, Eagle and Albion, October 1956: Does any reader have info regarding relatives of S/Lt Gordon Meredith of Coombe Rd, Croydon, killed on October 5, 1956? He was taking part in an operation from HMS Bulwark during the Suez Crisis. His plane crashed in Mellieha, Malta. His body was taken to Hal Far, but his final burial site is not known. Contact Ian Roberts, 57, Glenfield Rd, Ashford TW15 1JJ, tel: 01784 242229.

AB Edmund Henry Smith: If any ex-shipmates have any info on AB Smith, contact his nephew, Bryan Smith, 10, Kimber Court, Salisbury, South Australia 5108.

HMS Stalker LST (3) 3513: Mr M.E. Tattersall intends to set up a Registered Charitable Trust to preserve this vessel, currently in Rosyth Dockyard awaiting a decision on her future. If anyone would consider helping, contact Mr Tattersall, 39, Fairfield, Helden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6JB.

Lt Cdr Richard (Dick) C. Dumas: Alice Dumas seeks info about her father, who served in the RN from 1930-64. He served in HMS Seaborn (Lt), HMS Racehorse (Lt, in command), HMS Forth (Lt), HMS Start Bay (Lt, in command), HMS Opportunity (Lt Cdr, in command) and HMS Rapier (Lt Cdr, in command). He was awarded the DSC and OBE in 1946. His last appointment was HMS Cochrane at the Boom Defence in Loch Ewe. Contact Alice Dumas at 3, Tannery House, 6, Deal St, London E1 5AG, mobile: 07779 274911 or email: alicedumas@yahoo.co.uk

HMS Saumarez (G12) 1943-45: John Clements seeks anyone who knew his grandfathers, John Clements (sister 1st class in Saumarez) and Norman Parry (AB in HMS Renown). He wants to learn more about their wartime service. Contact John Clements, 7019, Nicoll Ave, South, Richmond, Minnesota 55423-3162, USA, or email: transitman9645@yahoo.co.uk

HMS Bulawayo: Does anyone have any pictures of HMS Bulawayo, circa 1948-49, in which Derek Wright was a stoker. Contact his son-in-law, Mike Payne, on 0116 2332428 or email: m.payne10@ntlworld.com

Peter King: The eldest daughter of Peter is looking for any photos with him in. He served in the Navy as a cook in the 70s, went to civvies in the 80s and then joined the RFA in the early 90s as motorman. He died on November 7, 1997, whilst on board RFA Sir Percival in dock at Southampton. If anybody can forward any photos she would be really grateful. Write to Samantha King-Smith, 9,

Crofton Park, Yeovil, BA21 4EA, or email: sam.kingsmith@btopenworld.com

LCT 603: Alan Garden is trying to document the activities and movements of his late father-in-law, S.G. (Sam) Barrall, during his time as signalman on LCT 603 in WW2. He joined the craft just before it sailed for the Med in April, 1943, as part of 27th LCT Flotilla. Can anyone help with: 1) SGB and LCT 603 up to Salerno landings. 2) Fate of LCT 603 - it was lost by early 1944. Where, when and how did this happen? 3) Activities of SGB in Italy during late 1943 and N. Africa

until April 1944, when he joined LCI(L) 174. Contact Alan at 124, Broom Hill Rd, Rochester ME2 3LG, tel: 01634 721884 or email: garden@tesco.net

HMS Aubretia: The late George Edward Sand served in the Flower-class corvette HMS Aubretia during WW2. His son is in the process of making a model of this vessel and seeks detail of the hull paintwork during 1942-43. Contact Ron Sand, 40, Bromfield Lane, Mold CH7 1JL, tel: 01352 759492 or email: ronsand@ic24.net

Volunteers sought

LOWESTOFT Maritime Defence Museum urgently needs volunteers to help bring their fast patrol boat up to operational standard.

Museum flagship **Bravo 6**, the former **RNOV Al-Mujahid**, was recently brought back to the UK from Oman under her own power in a five-week voyage.

Now moored at East Cowes Marina on the Isle of Wight, the museum want to work on her - and particularly needs mechanical engineers or artificers with experience of Paxman Ventura 16v YJCMs and electrical and comms engineers.

Contact Ian Rigby on 01226 752113 for details.

Navy News Online carries updated reports and background material, as well as a selection of articles from this edition of the paper. There is also a gallery of photographs, some of which have not been published in the paper. Check the website at www.navynews.co.uk

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More than 700 million tune in to Royal Navy squadron Thunderer speaks to the world



● Lt Mickey Rooney conducts a live interview with a Canadian radio station over his mobile phone close to the radio aerial mast which was used to recreate the historic Marconi transmission.

MORE than 700 million people across the globe tuned in to see the efforts of a group of Royal Navy engineering students come to fruition.

Thunderer Squadron set itself the challenge of recreating the historic transatlantic signal set up by Marconi which heralded the dawn of modern radiocommunications 100 years ago, as reported in January's *Navy News*.

Now figures from Canadian broadcasters have revealed the extent of the interest shown in the recreation of history.

In addition to Canada, most European countries carried the event live – including Russia – and it was also seen live on many Gulf television stations. The UK was one of the few countries which did not carry the transmission.

Lt Mickey Rooney, the officer in charge of the project, said more than 700 million people watched the three-minute event, in which the grandson of Marconi, also named Guglielmo, used a World War I-vintage Royal Navy Type II rotary spark gap transmitter to repeat the Morse code letter

S – three dots, used as they would not be easily mistaken against background signals, and because they caused less wear and tear on the transmitter.

That original signal, on December 12, 1901, was picked up by Marconi himself in Newfoundland, having sailed from the UK in order to establish the receiving station.

Lt Rooney stressed that the aim of Project Atlantic Leap was to overcome problems associated with the modern communications environment to recreate the signal – which was achieved.

The frequency allocated, a narrow slot in the busy airwaves of the 21st century, made it almost impossible for the signal to be heard across the Atlantic, so in order to complete the project a second signal was broadcast from a powerful modern NATO transmitter in Lancashire, allowing Canadian and American military students to test their receivers, based on Marconi's plans.

The Americans had constructed a kite to carry their aerial, using Marconi's Baden-Powell model as a guide, and it proved so aerodynamically effective it almost took a couple

of students off a cliff, said Lt Rooney.

For the students who had decamped from their base at Southampton University to Poldhu Cove in Cornwall, assisted by project co-ordinator Lt Scott 'Stimpy' Simpson, it was just another reason why the RN engineering sponsorship scheme is proving so attractive.

Thunderer comprises just over 100 undergraduates, who combine the best of university life with the opportunities afforded by the military connection; adventurous training, access to equipment, travel – and pay.

The majority of students go on to join the Navy – those who do not pursue a military career are obliged to repay the bursary which saw them through university, although not the pay they received for their time as Reservists.

Thunderer is open to both school-leavers and Royal Navy technicians, and covers aerospace, mechanical and electrical (weapons) engineering disciplines.

Its mission statement is "to educate, stimulate and support the future Engineer Officers of the Fleet in preparing them for the challenges of the Front Line."

For more details on Thunderer Squadron see their website at www.soton.ac.uk/~thunder

Great progress and inevitable gremlins

THE PROGRESS made in radio communications over the course of a century was vividly demonstrated as preparations were made to recreate the original Marconi transatlantic signal.

As members of Thunderer Squadron made final adjustments to their ancient spark-gap transmitter, the officer in charge of the project, Lt Mickey Rooney, was constantly interrupted by requests for radio interviews.

During the morning and early afternoon, Lt Rooney did almost a dozen live interviews with radio stations in the US and Canada over a mobile phone.

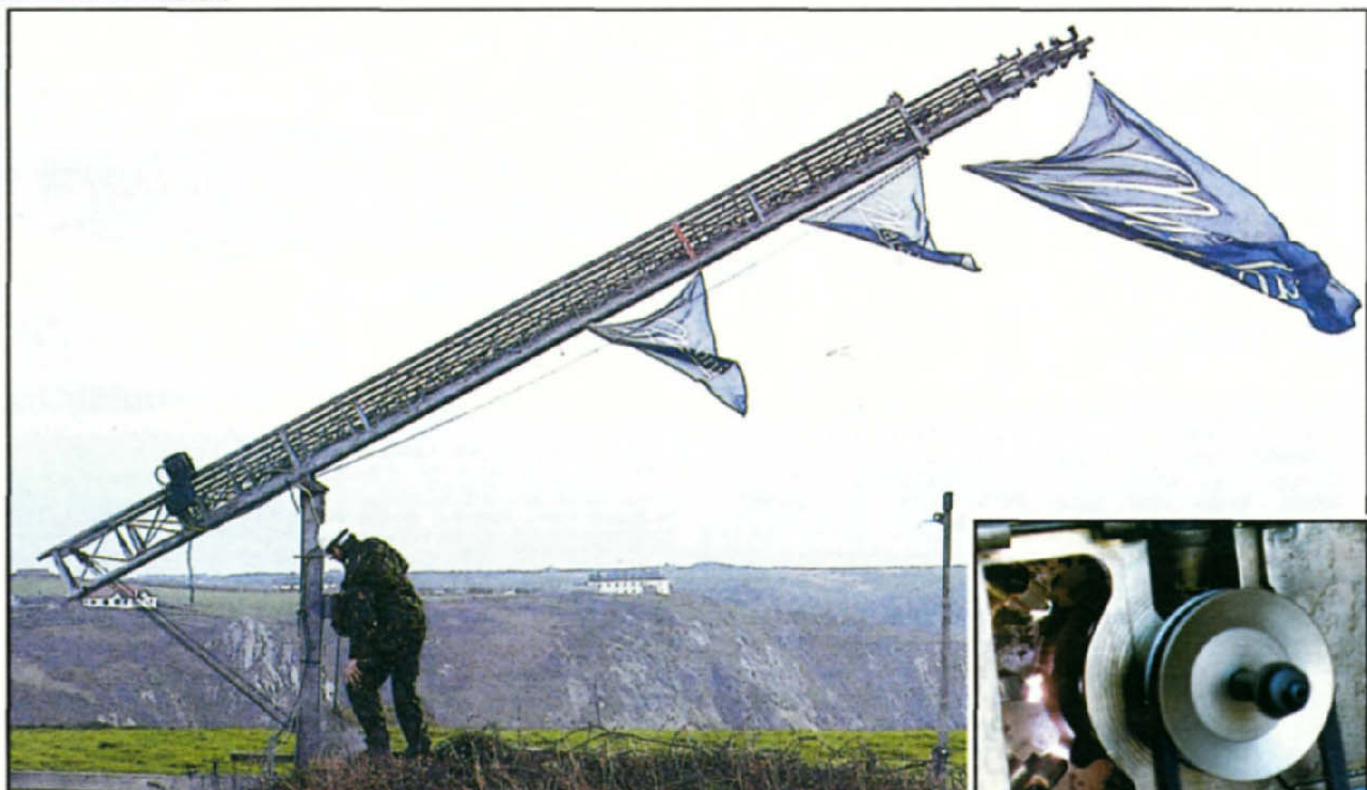
Later that afternoon he helped crank up what he described to onlookers as "the world's largest, oldest mobile phone" – a 1914 RN Type II rotary spark gap transmitter housed in a Transit van.

Lt Rooney admitted they had to be very careful not to blow up the vintage transmitter, and (non-original) elements had to be replaced and amended to allow the project to go ahead.

"We had to work out how to generate a spark without blowing up every mobile phone, every car radio and television in the area – the signal had to be refined," said Lt Rooney.

On a day littered with reminders of the significance of Marconi's contribution to communications, there had to be a place for gremlins.

And it was another great communications organisation, the BBC, which suffered, when an outside broadcast crew twice failed to set up a scheduled live link to the studio from their hi-tech van high on a Cornish cliff because of technical problems.



● (Above) A member of the Royal Navy engineering students' Thunderer Squadron starts to lowering the transmitter mast which was used to recreate the original transatlantic transmission by Guglielmo Marconi at Poldhu Cove in Cornwall.

● (Inset) A spark generated by the Navy transmitter; the equipment was borrowed from the museum at HMS Collingwood. Working at a frequency between 150 and 364 kHz the transmitter had a range of 250-300 miles.



● (Left) Guglielmo Marconi, grandson of the Italian 'father of wireless', transmits the three dots on the Royal Navy's Marconi-type equipment – taken from a Royal Navy First World War ship – which recreated the first signal from Poldhu Cove exactly 100 years before.

Royal Naval Association



Shipmates gather to pay tribute to Gerry

THE CHURCH of St Mary the Virgin in Maldon was packed to capacity for a service in thanksgiving for the life of the late Shipmate Gerry Coulson, President of No 5 Area.

A popular and highly-esteemed member of the Association, he worked tirelessly on its behalf, especially in the Anglian region.

At the service, conducted by Father McIntosh, tributes to Shipmate Coulson were paid by the Rev Desmond Payne-Jeremiah, Mr Norman Hill and Shipmate Fred Chambers, chairman of the Association's national council.

A total of 15 standards were displayed at the service, including the national standard. Those represented were Soham and District, Fleet Air Arm Association Essex, Clacton, Colchester RNA, Colchester Submariners Association, Chelmsford, Brightlinsea, Royal Marines Chelmsford, Maldon, Raleigh, Harlow, Weeley, Brentwood, Essex Submariners OCA Branch Chelmsford.

Raiding party set to reclaim Victory

SEASONAL dinners, dances and other happy events, enjoyed by shipmates in the run-up to Christmas, included an enjoyable party at the King Charles Hotel, given by the CHATHAM branch, at which the Mayor of Medway, Cllr Tony Goulden, and his wife, Val, were guests of honour.

During the evening, the Mayor was made an honorary member and issued with a celebratory tot, which he downed in one go.

In his acceptance speech, he pointed out the injustice of having the most famous ship in the world, HMS Victory - which was built at Chatham and launched in 1765 - berthed in Portsmouth.

He called for volunteers to form a raiding party to march on Portsmouth and bring the Victory, firmly concentered in Pompey Dockyard, back to Chatham - "her rightful home."

His speech, and the party which followed, were greatly enjoyed by around 100 shipmates and their guests.



● The Mayor of Medway, Cllr Tony Goulden, arriving at the King Charles Hotel. With him, from left, are Mrs Debbie Degiorgio, the hotel manager, Chatham branch chairman S/M Wally Devine, mayress Val Goulden and branch vice chairman S/M Jack Harris.

Captain recalls welcome

THE President of FALMOUTH branch, Vice Admiral Sir James Jungius, welcomed the guests at a festive dinner dance.

The guests included Rear Admiral Tim McClement, former Commanding Officer of HMS Cornwall, and Mrs McClement, and Commodore T. Hogg and Mrs. Hogg.

After the traditional toasts were drunk, Admiral McClement thanked the RNA for its support for the Navy.

He said he will never forget the great welcome extended by the people of Falmouth during the visit there of HMS Cornwall - and the thoughtful gift of hot pasties on the ship's arrival in port!

The Master of Ceremonies was branch chairman Shipmate Harold Thompson.

Profitable end to the year

AS THE curtain fell on the seasonal celebrations, the year ended on a prosperous note for the WATERLOOVILLE branch, benefitting their favourite charities.

The concert party raised £1,568 at two events for the Children's Ward of St Mary's Hospital, Portsmouth, while the ladies' darts league raised £267.69 for the Crohns and Colitis Society.

A further £750 was donated to various good causes from the charity chest.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



The mystery ship in the December edition was HMS Nubian.

The winner of the £50 prize for identifying her was Mrs B.J. Bird, of Dorset.

Continuing the training theme of recent competitions, this month's mystery ship, here seen in Start Bay, was also familiar to a section of the Navy under instruction.

What is her name? The correct answer wins another £50.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is March 15, 2002. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our April edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 84

Name

Address

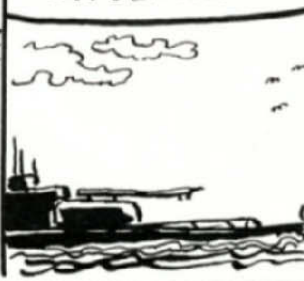
My answer

Naval Quirks

IN 1925 THE BRITISH SUB M2 WAS ADAPTED TO CARRY A SEAPLANE..



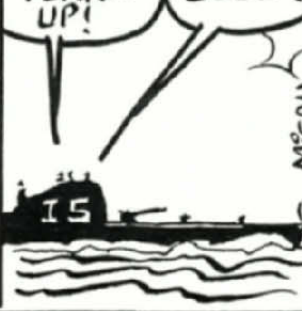
.. WITH ITS OWN HANGAR, CRANE AND CATAPULT SOMEHOW CRAMPED ON DECK..



THE JAPANESE TOOK UP THE IDEA IN 1932 - BUT THEIR SEAPLANE WAS STORED IN PARTS AND TOOK TOO LONG TO ASSEMBLE..



ANYONE SEEN THE GLUE?



Clubhouse carol service

MORE than 200 shipmates and guests attended the carol service organised by HANWORTH branch and held in their clubhouse.

At the service, conducted by branch padre Rev Paul Williams, the lessons were read by S/M F. Wadley, branch vice president, Nancy Hope, Thames Valley

WRNS, Col I. Moore, president Hanworth RMA, and Mrs L. Parker of the branch Ladies Section.

The guests included Capt. P. Hames, president of the branch, and Cllr C. Driscoll, London Borough of Hounslow.

Music was provided by the band of Surrey Yeomanry.

New standard for Stirling

IT WAS also a good finale to the year for STIRLING as well, which now boasts a brand new standard and a proud standard-bearer, Shipmate Mike Garbutt.

The standard dedication was conducted by the Rev Kit Jarman and well-supported by neighbouring branches.

The service was followed by a parade of roughly 100 shipmates displaying ten standards, which was inspected by Cdr D. Steele.

Life honour for stalwarts

FOR outstanding service as chairman of the CWMBRAN branch, and his work for the association, Shipmate John Davies was awarded life membership.

Also honoured was Shipmate Roy Wood, president of the HEREFORD branch, who in many years service has held all branch offices, including that of national council member No 7 Area.

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● The Ladies in Red – members of NAAFI Financial's sales team in their new uniforms.

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The sales teams are now sporting distinctive bright red jackets as part of the new-style uniforms which were introduced in December.

Besides the offices, the new uniform will also become an increasingly familiar sight 'out and about', and at presentations and surgeries held at places such as HIVEs.




Janita Hanif, NAAFI Financial's Marketing Director,


said: "Our new branch uniforms are intended to make our sales teams easier for customers to identify on base."

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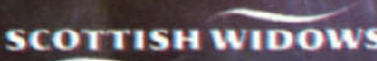






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● **MAGNIFICENT SEVEN:** Sgt Maj Roger Ould with his Royal Marines recruits at Leicester Armed Forces Careers Office.

Magnificent seven sign on together

WHAT do a wine shop assistant, a motorcycle technician and a body-builder all have in common? Answer: They are among a group of seven young men from Leicester who began the Royal Marines Commando training course last month.

All seven have been recruited from the Armed Forces Careers Office in the city - and it is believed this is the first time so many potential Marines have started training together from the same source.

The seven, aged between 16 and 26, come from a range of different backgrounds, but all are united by their determination to forge successful careers for themselves with the Royals.

Said body-builder Saul Schofield (26): "I have had a long-term interest in joining the Royal Marines and I am really looking forward to the mental and physical challenges that the Corps offers."

"The teamwork is another aspect that encouraged me to visit the Careers Office, and I am

pleased that with all seven of us going down to Devon together, I feel part of a successful team already."

At the Leicester Careers Office Sgt Major Roger Ould said: "Crucially, by sending these seven young men at the same time, we are able to demonstrate that there are no rules as to the type of person that should be interested in joining the Royal Marines."

"Ultimately, recruits need determination, commitment and the desire to be part of a successful and elite team."

"All of these men, regardless of what jobs they have had before now, have all of these qualities. I look forward to monitoring their progress once training starts in January."

- and six show off their new suits



IT IS not only the colour of the fire suits that has changed at RN air station Yeovilton - the entire duty fire crew lately were Reservists.

It turned out to be a busy night - what with covering the airfield flying requirements and the domestic site, there was also a bonfire party to monitor, following an earlier cancellation.

All RNR Aircraft Handlers attached to a Fire Station are expected to complete an extensive training schedule in order to maintain currency

- and all members of this crew have served at Yeovilton Fire Station in the past.

Between them they have over 100 years of experience.

● Yeovilton's RNR duty fire crew are (left to right) POA(AH) Charlie Dowdall, POA(AH) Daisy Adams, POA(AH) Jake Thackray, POA(AH) Nige Cross, LA(AH) Andy Ransome and POA(AH) Terry Gill.

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Weapons/Electronics Engineer

The role:

- Providing a post design service, including ship design, modification and engineering changes.
- Conducting in-depth analysis of defects and deficiencies.
- Training RSNF Technical personnel in all aspects of the British-built Al Jawf Class Minehunter.

The person:

- Ideally you'll have a BSc degree or equivalent or a combination of training and experience (i.e. Royal Navy) which provides a similar educational standard.
- 10 years experience gained in a warship related Weapons and Electronics field.
- At least three years spent within a project, design or maintenance planning environment.
- If you're an ex Royal Naval Weapons Engineer (or warrant Officer) with suitable experience in the Ship Support areas or Fleet Maintenance Groups, so much the better.

Electronics Technicians

The role:

- Supporting the maintenance and defect repair of Ship fitted electronic systems equipment
- Training the RSNF Electronics Technicians assigned to the repair group, associated with Communications, Sonar and Electronic Warfare on the British built Al Jawf Class Minehunters

The person:

- Educated to ONC level or equivalent
- Three years expertise in Radar (Type 1007), Electronic Warfare (EW), Communications (ICS 25) and IFF Equipment.
- Some knowledge of Sonar 2093 would be advantageous.
- If you're an ex Royal Naval Chief Artificer (AD or CEW) with experience in Ship Support or Fleet Maintenance Groups or an MOD or Dockyard trained Electronics Technician with experience in the Communications and Radar Equipment areas - you're perfectly qualified.

Magnetic and Acoustic Ranges Technician

The role:

- Responsible for the operation and maintenance of Magnetic and Acoustic Ranges installed at KANB, Jubail and used by the British built Al Jawf Class Minehunters.
- The operation and maintenance of the Sea and Land Ranges
- Overseeing training of the RSNF Electronics Technicians assigned to the Sea Ranges Group.

The person:

- Five years experience in engineering
- Ideally two years in Magnetic and Acoustic ranging, you'll need particular expertise in the use of the Magnetic and Acoustic Sea Ranges.
- Any ex Royal Navy Chief Artificers (Weapons or Electrical Specialists) (An ex DERA trained Ranges Technician could be suitable, too).
- Ideally, educated to ONC level or hold an equivalent professional qualification or Naval training.

Ranges Supervisor

The role:

- Responsible for the operation and maintenance of Magnetic and Acoustic Ranges installed at KANB, Jubail. The Ranges are used by the British built Al Jawf Class Minehunters.
- In addition to the operation and maintenance of the Sea and Land Ranges, the post holder is responsible for the management of the Ranges Technicians and the training of the RSNF Electronics Technicians assigned to the Sea Ranges Group.

The person:

- Five years experience in this specialist field, with two years in a supervisory capacity.
- Particular expertise in the use of the Magnetic and Acoustic Sea Ranges is required, though suitable ex Royal Navy Chief Artificers (Warrant Officer or Charge Chief Artificers in the Weapons Specialisation) could be suitable.
- Educated to ONC level (or above) or hold an equivalent professional qualification or Naval training.
- Ideally an ex Royal Naval Warrant Officer or Charge Chief Artificer (Weapons or Electrical Specialist) or an ex DERA trained Ranges Supervisor or Technician.

Magnetic and Acoustic Ranges Supervisor

The role:

- Operating and maintaining magnetic and acoustic ranges used by the British built Al Jawf Class Minehunters.
- Managing the Ranges Technicians and training the RSNF Electronics Technicians assigned to the Sea Ranges Group

The person:

- Five years' experience - two in a supervisory capacity.
- Expertise in the use of Magnetic and Acoustic Sea Ranges
- Educated to ONC level (or above) or hold an equivalent professional qualification or Naval training.
- Ideally for an ex Royal Naval Warrant Officer or Charge Chief Artificer (Weapons or Electrical Specialist) or an ex DERA trained Ranges Supervisor or Technician.
- Suitable ex Royal Navy Chief Artificers (Warrant Officer or Charge Chief Artificers in the Weapons Specialisation) are also welcome to apply.

Electrical Technicians

The role:

- Supporting the maintenance and repair of ship-fitted electrical systems equipment.
- Training the RSNF Electrical Technicians assigned to the repair group.
- Primarily associated with the Power Generation, Compass Equipment, Ships Log and Ships Positional Systems installed on the British built Al Jawf Class Minehunters.

The person:

- Educated to ONC level or an equivalent professional qualification
- Or a combination of Naval training and experience to the same standard.
- Five years' engineering experience - three in Shipborne Electrical Systems and Ships' Positional Systems.
- Ideally for an ex Royal Navy Chief Artificer (Electrical Specialist) with suitable experience in the Ship Support areas or Fleet Maintenance Groups or an MOD, dockyard-trained Electrical Technician.
- Suitable ex Royal Navy Chief Artificers (Electrical Specialists) are also welcome to apply.

If you have the skills we are looking for and want to broaden your horizons, find out more and apply online at www.projectay.co.uk or write quoting reference 595 to Karen Corrigan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Resourcing, BAE SYSTEMS, W386, BAE SYSTEMS, Warton Aerodrome, Mill Lane, Preston, Lancs PR4 1AX. Email: karen.corrigan@baesystems.com Fax: 01772 855286.

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The MOD is introducing a policy of routine notification of reserve service to civilian employers. With effect from 1 July 2001, you will be required to provide full details of your employer on joining the reserve forces and you will then be expected to inform them of your reserve liability. Recruits are normally British or Commonwealth subjects, aged between 16 and 40 (45 for ex-RN), male or female and physically fit.



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e-mail jenny.shotliff@energ.co.uk



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FB Heliservices Ltd, Fax: 01264 782439
Middle Wallop, Stockbridge, e-mail: alan.biles@bristolow.co.uk
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As an inspector of marine accidents (engineering), you will be responsible for conducting accident investigations independently, with your Principal Inspector, or as part of a multi-disciplinary team. The job will involve extensive travel within the UK, and occasionally, overseas. You will have a current driving licence.

You must hold a Class1 Engineer Certificate of Competency, a degree in mechanical/marine engineering or equivalent and have experience of merchant vessel operation at a senior level at sea or ashore. Alternatively you must be a degree-qualified marine engineer officer with at least two years charge experience at sea in the Royal Navy, and a Chartered member of a recognised engineering institution.

You should also possess sound report writing skills, strong powers of analysis, the ability to work in a team and liaise effectively at all levels of management.

The position is available from May 2002. Starting salary will be in the range £32,985 - £39,581 depending on qualifications and experience. Relocation expenses of up to £5,000 may be available in appropriate circumstances.

For further details and an application form (to be returned by 28 February 2002), write to Roger Brydges, MAIB, First Floor, Carlton House, Carlton Place, Southampton, SO15 2DZ, UK.



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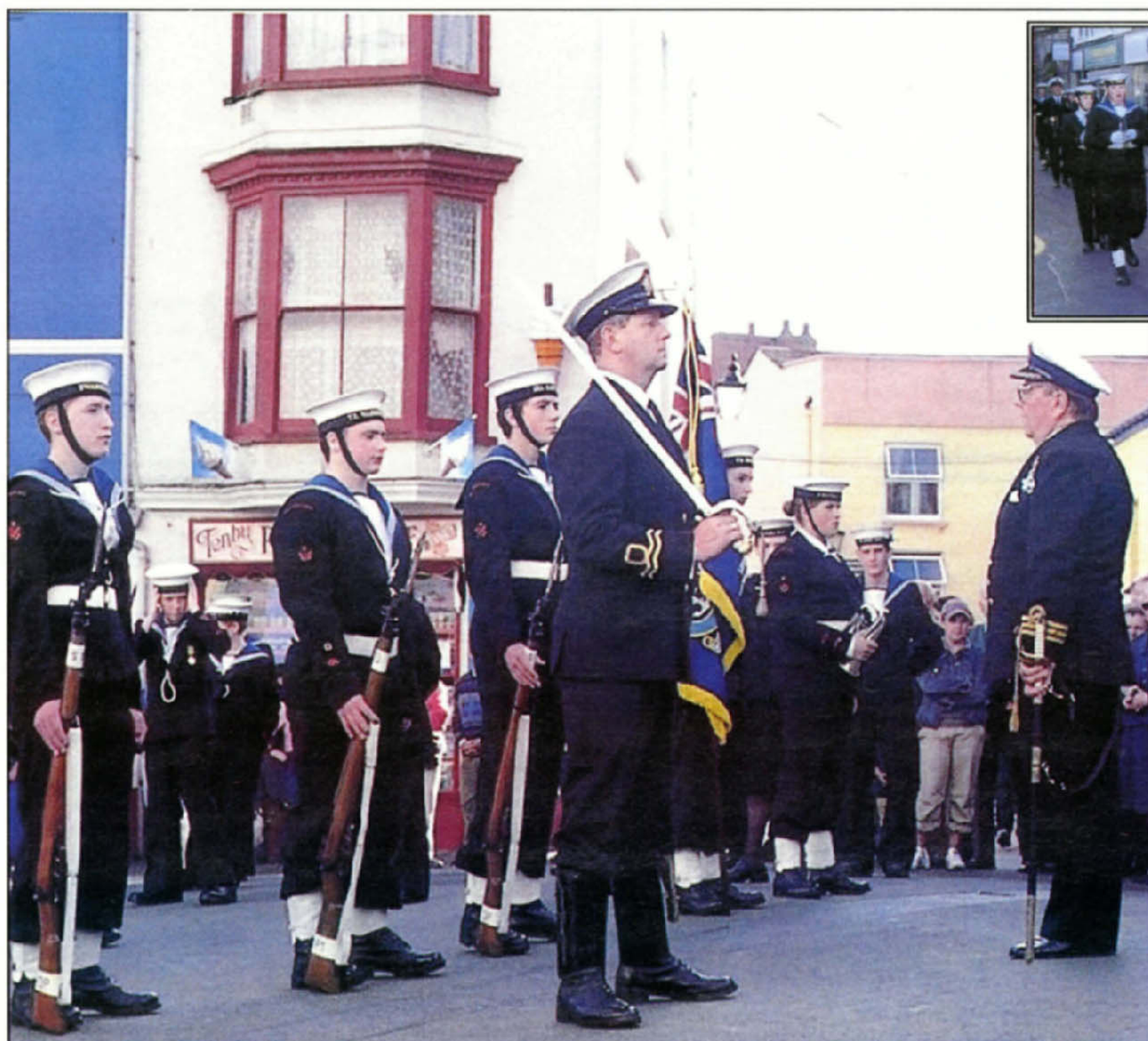
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DNR SO2 Support - Lt Cdr Phil Dickinson PSTN: 023 9272 7760; Mil 9380 27760



TENBY STRIKES GOLD

TENBY unit celebrated its 50th anniversary with a dinner and a special parade in the Welsh seaside town.

Past and present cadets, staff and committee attended the dinner along with three former commanding officers – including Ted Martin, holder of the Navy League Gallantry Medal.

Many former cadets are now serving in the Royal Navy – one currently with NATO in the United States.

● Left: Cdr A. Mason addresses the parade following his inspection of guard, band and divisions. Guard Commander was Lt Bill Davies of Swansea Unit. Above: the Rhondda unit band leads the parade through Tenby.

Colne Light play at the Menin Gate



THE BAND of TS Colne Light travelled to Ypres in Belgium to take part in the Last Post ceremony held there every evening at the Menin Gate.

The famous gate, built in the 1920s, commemorates all those who fell in World War I and have no known grave.

The idea for the trip came during the celebrations of the Colchester unit's 60th anniversary last year. The band was accompanied by their local MP, Bob Russell, who is one of the Parliamentary advisers to the Royal British Legion.

At the ceremony the Exhortation to the Fallen was read by Cadet of the Year A/C Garry Madden, who also laid the wreath. The band then played both national anthems followed by Reveille. Later there was a reception at Ypres Town Hall.

Before returning home the cadets visited Tyne Cott Military Cemetery (left), said to be the biggest in the world.

Unit public relations officer PO Joan Soole told Navy News: "We think we are the very first Sea Cadet unit ever to take part in this ceremony. It was a wonderful experience for the Cadets and we hope one day to do it again."

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The GANG PLANK Club



Look out!

In this month's Navy News look out for a great feature on the Queen Alexandra's Royal Navy Nursing Service. It's a very special year for them. Read all about it in the Navy News QARNNS Supplement!

Then look out for a very special interview in the March Gang Plank pages. We'll be taking one of our young readers along to interview one of these remarkable nurses!

Don't miss it!



GREAT YEAR FOR SPORT!



WIN A SET OF UMBRO FOOTBALL KIT AND EQUIPMENT PLUS A BOX OF NEW WALKERS FOOTBALLS PRODUCT



Navy News has teamed up with Walkers to offer five lucky readers the chance to get their hands on some Umbro football kit and equipment.



Walkers Footballs are a fun snack made from corn puffs and are designed to look just like mini footballs. They come in delicious bacon and cheese and are set to become the latest and ultimate must-have snack for the football crazy!

A hilarious new TV ad has been made for Footballs starring the face of Walkers - Gary Lineker and co-starring another footballing hero - David Seaman, goalkeeper for Arsenal and England.

You will be able to find out what the mischievous Gary gets up to when the ad hits our TV screens on 15th February -

For every packet of Walkers Footballs sold, 1p will go towards an exciting new scheme called the Walkers Football Fund.

In association with Umbro, this fund will give every Primary School and U11 FA affiliated football club in the country the chance to get their hands on Umbro football balls or shirts worth over £100 -

All you have to do is answer the following question:

Q: Who is starring alongside Gary in the new Walkers Footballs advert?

Send your answers on a postcard with your name, address and membership number to:
Walkers Footballs Comp,
Young Readers Club, Navy News,
HMS Nelson, Queen Street,
Portsmouth PO1 3HH



CLOSING DATE 8th MARCH 2002

The Editors decision is final. Relatives and employees of Navy News are ineligible to enter.

It's going to be a great year for sport with the World Cup in Japan and the Commonwealth Games being held so close to all of us in Manchester.

That's all happening a little later in the year, but right now the people in the American state of Utah are preparing for the Winter Olympics! They take place in and around Salt Lake City, from the 8th to the 24th February.

It's estimated that 2,345 athletes will compete in the Games in 15 different sports.

Great Britain might not have much snow and ice to boast about, but we have got some top athletes entered in the Winter Games.

Watch out for Mark Hatton. He's going to

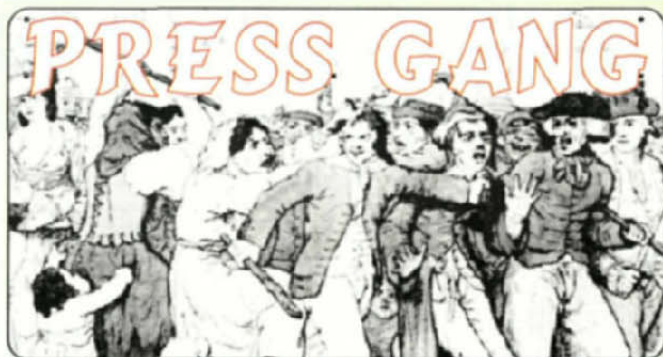
be competing in the craziest winter sport of them all - the Luge. In case you don't recognise the name, this is the sport in which competitors hurtle down a narrow, icy track, feet first, on something that resembles a tea tray! You have to be very brave! Mark is 28, from London. All the crew wish him Good Luck.

There'll also be British entries in the short track speed skating and in the Ice-Skating. Sadly we don't think there's another British "Eddie the Eagle" taking part in the Ski Jumping this year.

You can follow the Winter Olympics on the TV and on the web at www.saltlake2002.com

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Speed Skating



PRESS GANG

Last year our Press Gang visited some great places around the country and wrote some brilliant reports.

We're now looking for this year's Press Gang members. All you have to do is write Captain Plank a report about one of your favourite subjects. Your report must be no longer than 200 words.

Write your name and address on the back of the paper and send it to The Press Gang at the Gang Plank Club, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH. Press Gang members must be under 16.

A special panel of judges will read your reports and then choose two lucky members to go on special assignments.

So, what are you waiting for? Press on with your writing.

PS. Thanks to James Ware for his Action Stations report. It's with the judges now!

WE HAVE 50 "GLO-BUGS" TO GIVE AWAY



These can be clipped to your clothes so you can be seen in the dark.

To be one of our lucky 50 winners send your name, address and membership number on a postcard to:

**Glo-Bugs, Young Readers Club,
Navy News, HMS Nelson,
Queen Street, Portsmouth, Hants
PO1 3HH**



WIN AN AMAZING TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND WITH GBR CHALLENGE!

The Gang Plank crew are all dead keen on sailing and have been following the progress of Britain's team for the America's Cup.

The America's Cup is the top trophy in the sailing world, a bit like the Formula 1 Championship. It costs millions of pounds to build a good enough racing yacht to enter so Britain has not entered for many years.

Now, however, with the help of a very generous man called Peter Harrison, Britain is to have a yacht in the next America's Cup. Under the name GBR Challenge, Peter has put together a wicked team of yachtsmen and women and he's building a brand new yacht. But the design is top, top secret!

Here's where you come in!! GBR Challenge is running the CREW Challenge, a competition to design an America's Cup boat hull. It's for 9-13 year olds and the prize is a trip to New Zealand to watch the GBR team in the Louis Vuitton Cup (the heats for the America's Cup) in October.

If you want to know more and enter, then log on to the web site www.gbrchallenge.com

Tell your teachers too, there's loads of good educational stuff on the site!

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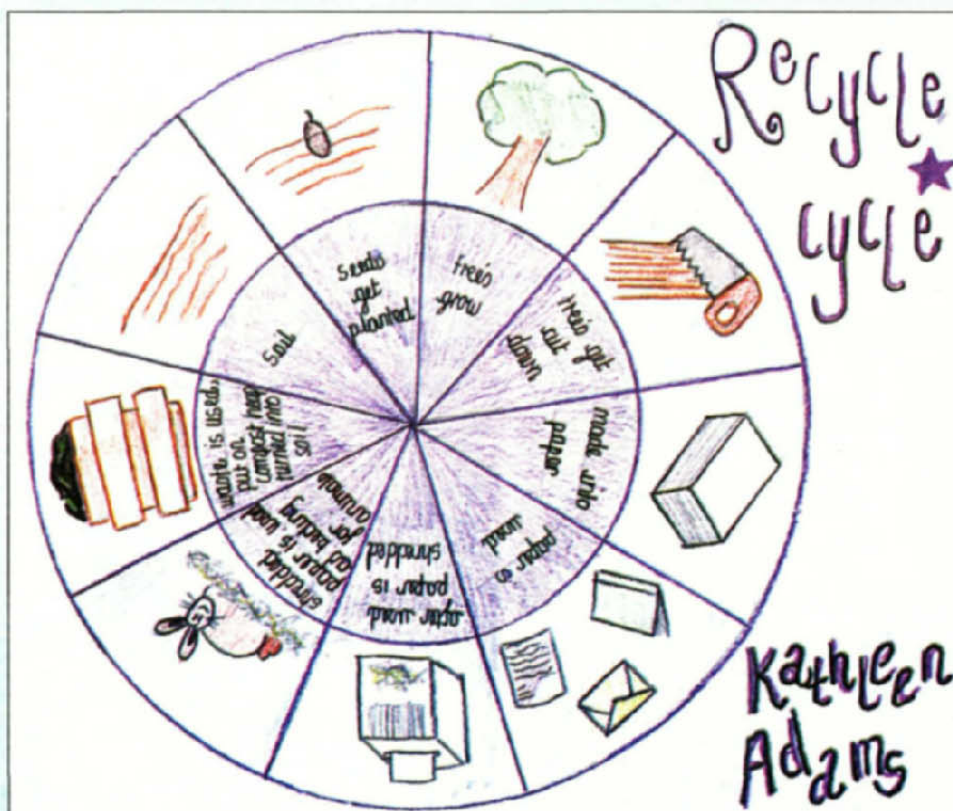
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THE MESS DECK

Top Pictures

Thank you for all your great ideas on Cutting down on Waste and Conserving energy. We've had some top drawings! We'll be featuring them in our next few issues and then awarding some Great prizes for the best ideas!

Here's Kathleen Adams superb Recycling Cycle, the Gang Plank crew think it's really clever. Well done Kathleen!



AHOY THERE SHIPMATES!

There are lots of exciting changes afoot for 2002

We are introducing a two tier Club from January 2002.

Our Younger Readers (10yrs and under) will still belong to

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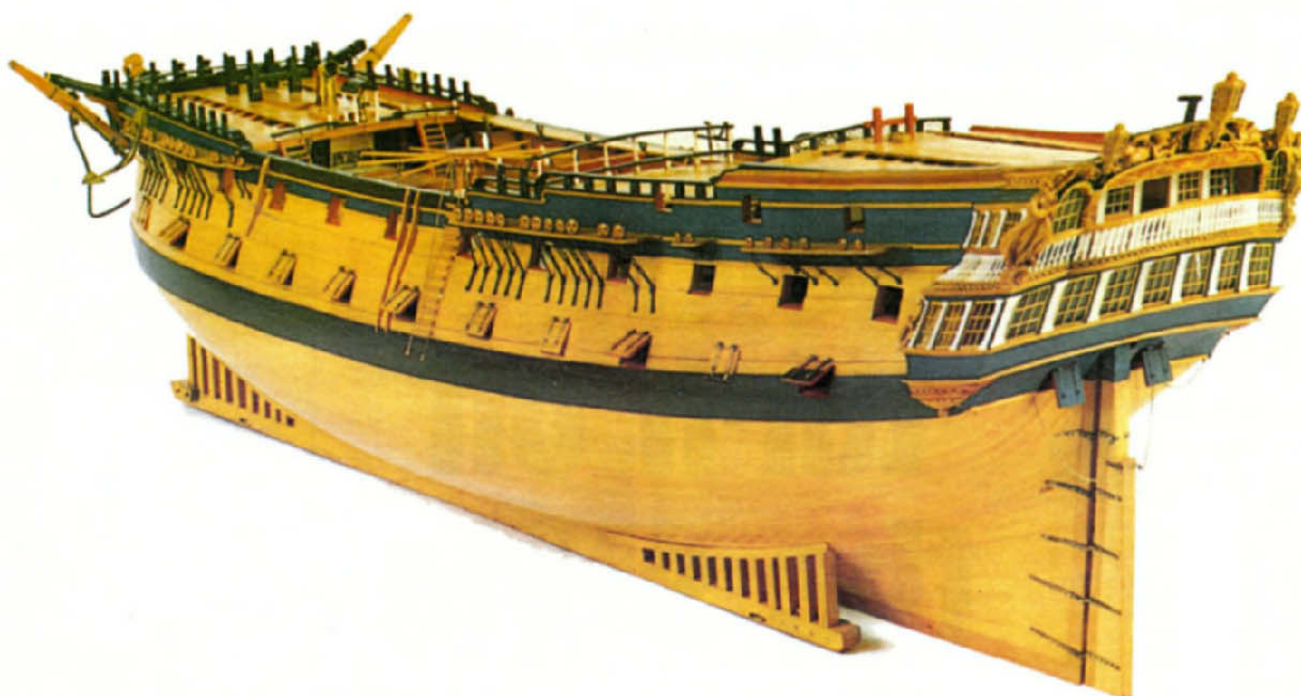
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Samuel Pepys raved about them. A later Secretary of the Navy built a whole wing on to his country seat to house them. Today they exchange hands for hundreds of thousands. But no one knew anything much about them – until Angus White discovered a scrap of paper hidden inside one, written by a man he calls 'The Michelangelo of the Navy Board Model Makers'



IMAGINE peering through the lens of a surgical endoscope to see the magnified and illuminated image, not of a nasty case of coronary thrombosis in the posterior vena cava, but the hold of an antique model ship – a secret and long forgotten compartment, full of strange shadows and unfamiliar shapes, now seen for the first time since its creation over two centuries earlier.

Despite the distorted image created by the fish-eye lens, you begin to make out certain features: a long line of square stanchions supporting the deck above, gouge marks on the inside of the hull, loose wood shavings, untidy dribbles of glue – and then, an inexplicable light-coloured patch right in the middle.

As the endoscope bears down upon it, you feel the hairs on the back of your neck rise as you recognise the unmistakable texture of paper.

It appears to be folded over many times and nailed to the floor of the hold. This isn't a scrap of paper dropped by accident; it's been put there with obvious deliberation. It must be of some significance and unless you are a most incurious individual, it has to come out.

To share the excitement of the moment, you need to know more about the model ship itself, and why it's so special. In England, between about 1650 and 1800, there arose a tradition for building exquisite replicas of Royal Navy warships. They were built in a distinctive and immediately recognisable style and were believed to be commissioned by the Navy Board (which administered the Royal Dockyards), hence their generic title, 'Navy Board Models'.

They always featured the following characteristics:

- Built to the same scale of 1:48
- Hull only, showing the configuration of the decks, gun ports, cabins and carved work, but no masts or rigging
- Built of the finest Turkish boxwood, giving a beautiful mellow colour to the hull and decks
- Fine details carved in boxwood, bone, ivory, brass and ebony

The models were built with consummate skill and created a fabulous confection of boxwood, brass, bone, ebony, gold leaf and painted details in the typical naval colours of Prussian blue and Venetian red. Add to this the beautiful lines of the ships themselves and it's hardly surprising that they have been so highly prized down the centuries – one, of HMS Bristol, was sold ten years ago for £98,000.

Most of the surviving Navy Board Models have ended up in museums around the world (the National Maritime Museum and

After 200 years, model mystery starts to unfold

the Science Museum have the best collections), often beautifully restored and displayed – and yet there is an abiding mystery surrounding them all.

There is actually no documentary evidence to prove that they were anything to do with the Navy Board, nothing to tell us who they were built for, why, where or when they were built, nor even who built them.

There are about 150 surviving examples, much admired, hugely valuable and of great historical importance, and yet no one really knows anything about them other than, in some cases, which ship they represent.

Because they were so accurately made and because the Naval archives are so complete, identification is sometimes quite straightforward – as in the case of the one containing the piece of paper.

Sometime before the endoscope was inserted in her she had already been identified as that of the 50-gun ship HMS Leopard, launched at Sheerness in Kent in 1790.

Who but the maker of the model would have left a folded piece of paper in a place like that? The operation to remove it was slightly more difficult and certainly took longer than a routine triple heart by-pass that was normally associated with the endoscope so kindly lent me by St Thomas's Hospital. It took a whole evening and much of the following night to extricate it from its hiding place. Scalpels, drills, forceps, swabs, black coffee and a rather splendid bent kebab skewer were all brought into play. The operation was planned and executed immaculately and the patient was left with an invisible scar.

The folded piece of paper was covered in glue and had to be steamed open – elongating my agony but increasing my conviction that it contained 'something'. I was right. Written with a quill, it contained the following revelation: "This mottle was made by Geo. Stockwell at Sheerness on the 56 year of our Lord 1787 in the 56 year of his age".

the year of our Lord 1787 in the 56 year of his age".

Brief it might have been, but the information it contained opened more doors than, at first glance, could be possibly guessed: this note told us more about the who?, where? and when? of Navy Board Models than all the rest of the existing information on the subject put together.

Stockwell was a shipwright employed at the Royal Dockyard at Sheerness and he had made the model of the Leopard at the same place and at the same time as the real thing was being built, probably just outside his workshop.

Why? I haven't the faintest idea – but did this mean that all the Navy Board Models were built concurrently with the real things?

This was an isolated case and proved nothing. Within a few months I was allowed access to a beautiful model of the 50-gun ship HMS Bristol, also launched at Sheerness during the time Stockwell was known to be working there, in 1775.

The world of Naval historians, museum staff and Navy Board Model fanciers is small and close. The news of Stockwell's note – being the first of its kind – had spread far and wide and within three weeks I learned of a discovery made in America that made the hair on the back of my neck really stand on end. At the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, one day before I found the note in the Leopard, restorers working on a model of the 36 gun ship HMS Inconstant had found a piece of paper folded up and nailed to the floor of the hold. It read: "Sheerness Oct 25 1820 The Frigate Inconstant 36 guns made by Geo. Stockwell Son of Geo Stockwell Moddler".

So this note thing was a Stockwell family trait – they had been hidden all these years and they were both discovered within

hours of each other.

The Bristol was given the endoscope and bent kebab skewer treatment and gave up her treasure with much greater ease than the Leopard. It's revelation was just as spectacular, though, and began to suggest a trend: "This model was made May 7 – 1774 By Geo. Stockwell Shipwright at Sheerness Yard".

The Bristol was launched at Sheerness on October 25, 1775. Again, Stockwell had been building this model at the same time and at the same place as the real thing. Was that always the case? Why at the same time? Was it a part of the design process or was it just a gift for the Captain? It would have taken Stockwell and an apprentice a whole year to build a model like the Leopard or the Bristol. According to the pay books for Sheerness Yard, Stockwell was one of only five senior shipwrights (Quartermen) in the 1770s and 1780s. Why on earth would they allow one of them to spend his whole time building models and yet never officially acknowledge the practice?

So what? you ask. To understand the Stockwell thing, I think you need to be a serious Navy Board Model fancier. Like me. You need to understand the skill and creative licence that has gone into their creation and you need to understand the sheer oddness of the whole phenomenon that allowed highly-skilled full-time dockyard employees to spend whole careers building replica warships but never ever officially acknowledging that they even existed.

In the 1660s, the diarist Samuel Pepys was raving about them. His successor as Secretary to the Navy, Charles Sergison, was so proud of his collection that he built an entire wing on to his country seat in Sussex, especially to house them.

Whole galleries are devoted to them at the National Maritime Museum – and yet no one really knows anything about them.

I've always seen George's pri-

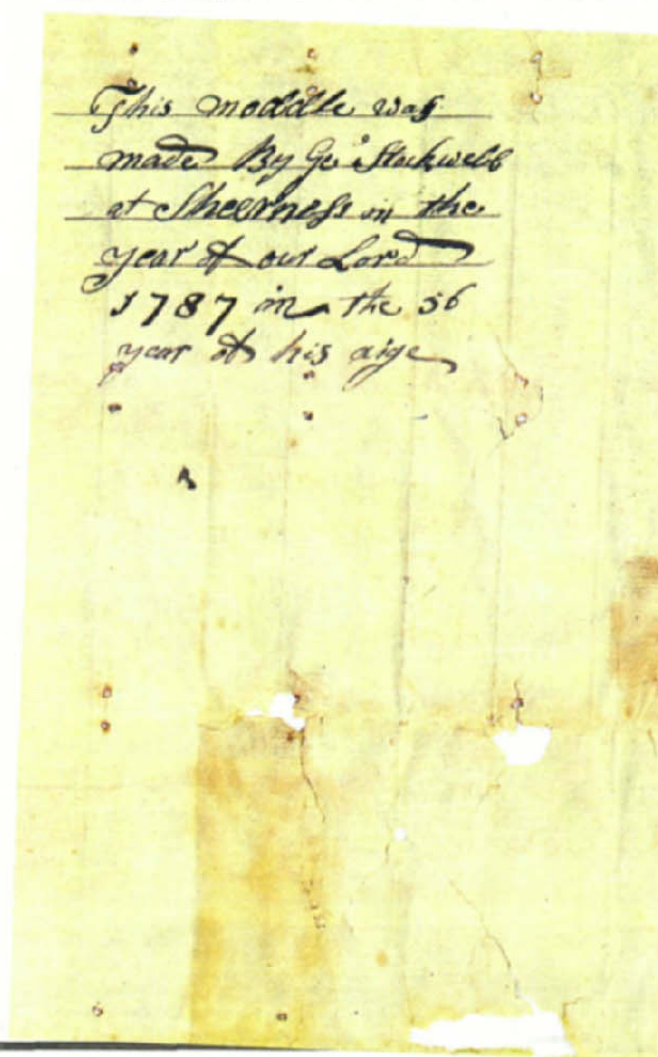
● George Stockwell's 'mottle' of HMS Leopard, made at Sheerness in 1787. The real Leopard was launched there on April 24, 1790. She was wrecked at Anticosti on the St Lawrence River in 1814.

cian Terry Stockwell, who composed a short piano piece for my daughter Sally to play called 'The Leopard Suite'.

I had found evidence to suggest that George had a rightful claim to the title of 'The Michelangelo of the Navy Board Model Makers'. I had found evidence that he was closely connected with a model making mafia that existed throughout the Royal Dockyards for nearly 200 years but I never found any official documentary acknowledgement that he was one of the men who built those beautiful model ships (other than the notes left in the models of the Bristol, Leopard and Inconstant) – only that he was employed as a shipwright at Sheerness for his entire career and that he always employed an apprentice.

The reason for the paucity of information could be either one of secrecy because modern warship design was involved or because Stockwell and his ilk were so low down the social ladder that their exploits were not worthy of record.

● The note found inside, nailed to the floor of the hold – others have since been found, casting new light on the highly prized Navy Board Models





Four wins, one defeat on Aussie debut

QANTAS v Royal Navy

Bexley Oval (45 overs).

Royal Navy won toss.

Royal Navy 336 for 4 (Tim Burt 71*, Steve Robinson 67, Sean Needham 61, Stuart Phelps 39)

QANTAS 136 (S. Phelps 3-22)

RN won by 200 runs

Eastern Suburbs v Royal Navy

Waverley (45 overs).

Royal Navy won toss.

Royal Navy 188 for 9 (Needham 46, S. Robinson 45, David Pinder 32)

Eastern Suburbs 16 for 1

Match abandoned after thunderstorm

New South Wales Combined Services v Royal Navy

David Phillips Oval (100 overs per day).

Royal Navy won toss

NSWCS 247 (Graham Jackson 4-60, S. Phelps 4-85) and 151 (S. Phelps 5-59)

Royal Navy 349 for 9 dec (S. Robinson 119, S. Phelps 91) and 50 for 2 in 4.5 overs

Royal Navy won by 8 wickets

ACT Combined Services v Royal Navy

Duntroon Oval, Canberra (100 overs per day).

Royal Navy won toss.

ACTCS 120 (D. Pinder 4-19) and 183 (G. Jackson 4-45, S. Phelps 4-59)

Royal Navy 191 (Andrew Ainsley 41*) and 113-3 (S. Robinson 47*)

Royal Navy won by 7 wickets

University of New South Wales v Royal Navy

David Phillips Oval (50 overs).

UNSW won toss.

UNSW 179

Royal Navy 183 for 5 (T. Burt 71)

Royal Navy won by 5 wickets

South Sydney District CC v Royal Navy

Alan Davidson Oval (50 overs).

RN won the toss.

SSD 191 for 8

Royal Navy 123 for 7 (George Appleton 52*)

South Sydney won by 68 runs.

Tourists turn on the style

THE FIRST touring cricket team to Australia returned with just one defeat and four wins from their six matches, writes Lt Cdr Jim Danks.

National airline QANTAS provided the first opposition, and found the Navy in red-hot form, racing to 336 for 4 in their 45 overs. The home team struggled in reply, and were dismissed for 136, giving the Navy a 200-run winning start to the tour.

Next up were the Eastern Suburbs, a club which has boasted players of the calibre of Tony Greig and Geoff Boycott.

Runs were not quite so easy to come by, and the tourists managed 188 for 9 in their 45 overs.

Only five overs of the home side's innings were possible before a terrific thunderstorm broke over the ground, and as forked lightning flashed and the pitch flooded, the game was abandoned with the Suburbs 16 for 1.

The next match was a two-day affair against NSW Combined Services, and with the Navy choosing to field, the home side was restricted to 247.

In their first innings, the Navy's batsmen again found their scoring touch, and they rattled up 349 before declaring with nine men out.

In their second innings, the home team appeared to be settling for a draw – they reached 101 for 3 with a possible 27 overs left.

But the Navy attack saw things differently, and ran through the lower order to dismiss the Services for 151, leaving the RN a target of 51 from a maximum of just six overs.

A swashbuckling cameo, in which two wickets fell, saw the tourists home with little more than an over to spare.

Canberra was next on the agenda for another two-day match, this time against ACT Combined Services.

Again the Royal Navy won the toss and chose to field, and the decision seemed justified when the

Services were bowled out for 120.

In reply, the Navy found runs just as hard to come by, and did well to post 191 by the time the last wicket fell.

The Aussies fared a little better in their second innings, scoring 183 and giving the Navy a target of 113 in a maximum of 38 overs.

Despite the hot conditions, with flies proving a constant irritation to players and spectators alike, the Navy batsmen again rose to the challenge and rattled off the runs required for the loss of just three wickets in 27 overs.

The squad returned to Sydney for the final two matches, with the penultimate being a one-day clash with the University of New South Wales.

The home team won the toss for the first time on the tour and elected to bat, making 179 in their 50 overs.

The Navy once again took up the run-chase with relish, overhauling the opposition with five men out and 13 overs remaining.

With an unbeaten record looming, the final game against South Sydney District Cricket Club got off to a good start when the Navy reduced their opponents to 49 for 4, but they recovered to 191 for 8.

The Navy got off to an even worse start, at one stage standing 6 for 3, and although there was a gutsy fight-back they could only muster 123 for 7 in their 50 overs, losing by 68 runs.

Off the field, members of the touring party visited many of the tourist sites in the region, and looked in at the Olympic site at Homebush.

There was also a trip to the beaches at Bondi and Coogee and a look at the Blue Mountains, and tickets were found for the New South Wales v Western Australia match at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Major financial support for the tour came from Alenia Marconi Systems, the RN and RM Sports Lottery and the Sailors Fund.



● Players of the Eastern Counties Youth rugby squad are put through their paces in a Royal Marines-led skills and fitness session.

Royals help the Eastern stars

ROYAL Marines from Lympstone headed east in search of new stars on the rugby pitch.

The Royals' Physical Training Unit – the fittest of a very fit bunch – went to Cambridge to put the Eastern Counties Youth rugby squad through their paces at Shelford Rugby Club on the outskirts of Cambridge.

The unit is responsible for encouraging young recruits to get fit and stay fit.

But on this occasion Sgt Chris Richards, fitness instructor and coach of the Royal Marines rugby squad, brought his experience to bear in a session with East Anglia's most promising players.

The session was arranged as part of a new partnership between the Eastern Counties Youth Academy and the RN and RM Careers Office in Ipswich.

Cpl Phil Weedon, who used to play rugby in the Corps, and is based at Ipswich Careers Office, was instrumental in bringing the military PTIs along to the session.

Phil said: "The training session was a fabulous opportunity for the youngsters, and was a challenge to all concerned, but the lads coped with it admirably, and Sgt Richards was very impressed with the squad's fitness and motivation."

"We have worked closely in supporting the Youth Academy wherever we can, in kit sponsorship, and some skills sessions, but this takes that partnership to a new level, and we hope to build on that in the future, with more coaching, and return visits; we hope to take the squad to Lympstone, next year, to see and use some of the fitness and sporting facilities there, and try out the assault courses for themselves."

"These instructors have got to be among the fittest men in the country, if not the world, and can not only give the young players a really good workout, but also advise them on diet and exercise and general fitness techniques."

Phil Smith, England Rugby Development Officer and Director of the Eastern Counties Rugby Academy, said: "The links with the Navy and Marines have made a big difference to the squad, and we are keen to carry this on in the future."

Leander initiative

THE ROYAL Navy has joined forces with the Plymouth Leander Swimming Association with a donation and a supply of Navy T-shirts.

A cheque for £700 has been presented to the Association by the Director of Naval Recruiting, along with T-shirts showing Leander's motif on one side and the Royal Navy on the other.

Club youngsters will now wear the T-shirts at competitions, helping to promote the Navy as a career opportunity and for fitness development.

Plymouth Leander teaches youngsters from as young as five years old and, depending on ability, an individual may receive personal training up to county, regional or national levels.

Basketball blueprint starting to take shape

NAVY basketball's five-year plan for success is gathering speed with the appointment of a civilian coach and the organisation of a long-overdue overseas tour.

The five-year blueprint is intended to make RN basketball competitive at inter-Services level after years in the doldrums.

The new coach is Mick Byrne, who comes with an impressive track record – he managed the full England team from 1991 to 1999 and coached the Solent Stars to National League success.

Mick, who served in the Navy until 1981, brings with him a terrific amount of experience – and respect.

Also climbing on board the management team is Cdr Sam Baker, who joins as the RN Basketball Association's development officer.

Sam has either played in or coached Navy squads throughout the past three decades, and is also expected to have a significant influence.

The Association's chairman, Lt Cdr Rob Knill, said: "We now have a strong coaching and management platform from which to build, and a firm direction."

Adding impetus to the drive for success, and helping to enthuse the current players, is a tour to Canada in May, when the Navy squad will play matches in Vancouver and Calgary.

The tour is receiving major funding from the RN and RM Sports Lottery.

For more details about Navy basketball and future events, see the website at www.rnbba.f2s.com

Navy rugby league squad set to tour Down Under

THE DEVELOPMENT of rugby league within the Naval Service takes another massive step forward later this month when a 30-strong tour party leave for a three-month 'Ashes' tour to Australia.

The tour is a major milestone in the relatively short history of rugby league as a Service sport, and reflects the determination and commitment of both players and management to maintain the momentum gathered over the past four seasons.

Consisting of 22 players, the squad is drawn from Naval units across the country, as well as a strong Royal Marines contingent.

The players will be accompanied by a support staff including tour manager POWEM Perry Mason who, through his contacts in Australia, has organised a full and challenging programme.

The two-week tour will feature a total of three matches, with the climax being a representative match against an Australian Defence Force XIII.

The match is scheduled to be played as a curtain-raiser to an NRL fixture, and promises to be the highlight of the tour.

Funding for the tour has come from Service sources, as well as from sponsors NAAFI Financial Services, Babcock BES and STAG Sports.

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Windsurfers will have their days

THE RN Sailing Association is to sponsor the RN Windsurfing Festival at Portland on May 18-19.

The aim of the festival is purely instructional and fun, following the success of last year's inaugural event at Calshot.

All windsurfing activities, including instruction and some equipment, will be free, and demonstration kit has been loaned by commercial firms.

There will also be an evening of 'fun and games'.

All levels of windsurfer are welcome, with a beginners' two-day course being run while more advanced practitioners will get instruction on the water.

A speed trap will be set up to clock the fastest speeds.

For details and reservations, contact Lt Cdr Simon Kingsbury (9375 65834) or Lt Cdr Paul Harrison (93510 6698).

Skiers attract sponsorship

IN A move thought to be unique, the company refitting HMS Invincible in Rosyth have provided sponsorship for a team competing in the RN Ski Championships in Les Arcs, France.

Babcock BES are undertaking the tailored refit of the carrier due to end in the first part of 2003.

As a result of the close working relationship between the defence contractors and ship's staff, Babcock's marketing department produced an unexpected £800 contribution towards the cost of sending a seven-strong team to France.

Babcock made the gesture through Marketing and PR Manager Drew Rance to thank the ship for its pivotal role in PR visits to Rosyth, and it was gratefully accepted on behalf of the skiers by the carrier's Senior Naval Officer, Cdr Jonathan Fry, who added the team would certainly toast the company's good health and generosity once they had arrived at Les Arcs.

Heron beat Nelson

HMS HERON have beaten HMS Nelson 5-3 at home in the Royal Navy Hockey Association cup.

Navy flyers take the lead

TWO NAVY glider pilots joined an RAF expedition to Australia – and because of their qualifications, were chosen to take leading roles.

WO John Bradbury, of HMS Collingwood, and CPO Kev Fear, of the Armed Forces Careers Office, Birmingham, were the Dark Blue representatives on the trip to the Darling Downs Soaring Club near Jondaryan in Queensland.

John was selected by the RAF to be the Expedition Chief Flying Instructor with Kev as the Deputy Chief Flying Instructor. As the only Full Rated British Gliding Instructors in the Royal Navy, they said it was a great honour to lead an RAF gliding expedition.

Although the team did not experience the exceptional gliding weather normally associated with Australia, the expedition was still extremely successful with many British Gliding Association distance awards being claimed.

Despite being very busy, John and Kev managed to fly for 60 hours and over 2,000 kilometres as well as converting to several new types of glider.

The expedition site was very basic with each W.C. having its own resident frog

Dai's no Mickey Mouse athlete

ROYAL Navy athlete Dai Roberts has proved he is no Mickey Mouse runner by winning the prestigious Walt Disney World Marathon in Florida.

The veteran runner, who is based in the United States, powered through in the final mile to take the title by eight seconds in only his second marathon. Dai completed the race in 2h 32m 38s.

His success in the race, one of the top ten in the United States, brought him local celebrity status as he fielded interviews with broadcast and print journalists, appearing on breakfast TV and in television sports bulletins.

The race started in darkness in the early morning near EPCOT, following a ten-second countdown by Mickey and Minnie, according to Dai.

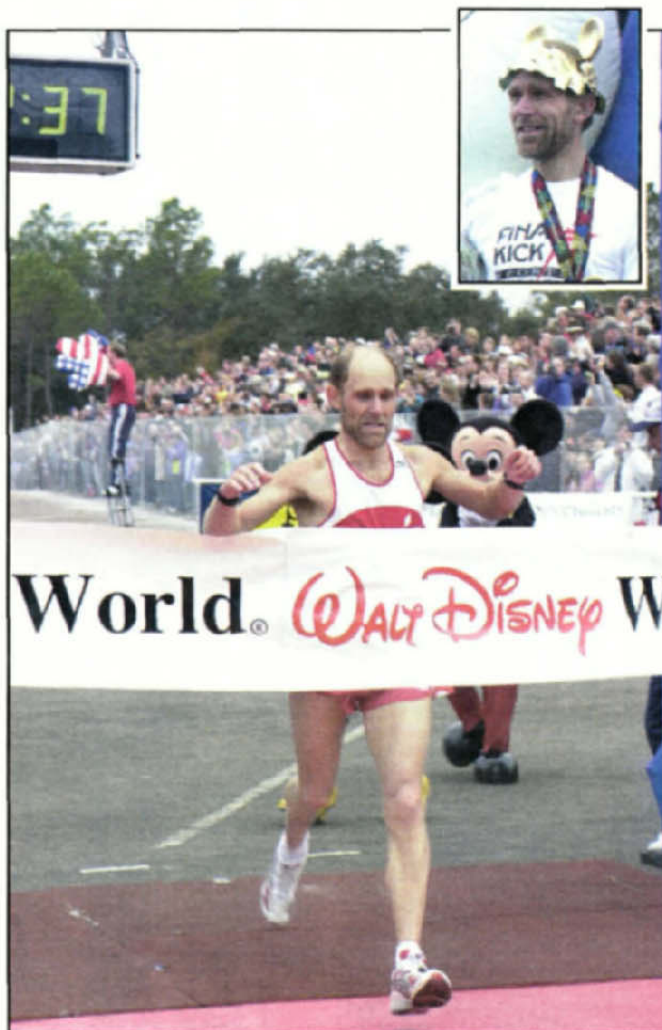
"A lead group went off and I thought about going with them, and decided against it and ran my own race using my heart rate as a guide," said Dai (40).

"I passed a few people and then my wife Denise was waiting at the Magic Kingdom as we went through the castle and she said I was 4th – the half-marathon and marathon ran together, so it was hard to judge where you stood until they peeled off at half way."

"This announcement by Denise that I was 4th and only a few hundred yards behind the third placed runner made me feel good as I felt quite comfortable at this stage – about ten miles or so."

"As the course wound through the kingdoms on twisted paths it was difficult to see anyone in front, but between 15 and 16 miles I caught the runner in third place and shortly before 20 the second-place guy."

"This meant that I had a personal escort on a bike who was very good at answering my questions and going off in search of other runners – good warfare training,



● Lt Cdr Dai Roberts wins the Walt Disney World Marathon in Florida, cheered home by Mickey Mouse, and (inset) Dai on the winner's rostrum, complete with Disney's version of the laurel wreath.

always use your assets and look ahead!

"He came back at about 22 miles saying that the leader was about 40 seconds ahead."

"I finally saw him as we had to run a switchback loop and he saw me coming."

"By 24 miles at the Boardwalk I was about 100 yards short of him and he just plugged away."

"My bike minder told me that the leader was suffering with some cramp so I chased him down."

"As we went through EPCOT I caught him at about 25½ miles, but

wasn't sure exactly how far we were and didn't want to sprint too soon for fear of blowing up."

"I gained about ten yards on him and then saw the 26 mile marker and went for it."

"As I rounded the final bend I checked behind and he was coming at me, but with the finish line in sight I wasn't going to give up too easily."

"What a great feeling in such a big race to break the tape and then get a hug from Minnie Mouse! Oh yes, and Denise."

"After that my legs hurt and felt stiff so I walked with my minder to the VIP tent for a drink – only tea."

The race is run primarily on the back roads of Disney, but Dai still received a lot of support, not least from the characters which lined the route.

"The finale to it all, after the awards ceremony was to sit in the Rose and Crown in 'Great Britain' at EPCOT and have a few pints of Guinness to soothe the old bones and muscles, while the kids ran around looking for more Disney characters to get autographs," said Dai, described by *Runners World* magazine as 'the English torpedo' after a fine win in the Netherlands.

"We then had sticky toffee pudding in the Rose and Crown garden. Real English!"

Dai, Denise and their three children moved to Virginia Beach in August 2000 when Dai took up his appointment under the Command of the Commander US Second Fleet and Striking Fleet Atlantic.

Before that Dai was on exchange in the Netherlands, where he had several notable big-race successes, and his Dutch running club named a race in his honour as a tribute to his running prowess.

His next target is the US National Masters Track Championships in Maine in the summer, where his chances of success are high, and, depending on his ship's programme, a full marathon is again on the cards.

Dartmouth team goes in search of adventure

A GROUP of young officers from Dartmouth had an early taste of the opportunities afforded by the Royal Navy when they took the Britannia Challenge, writes Lt Cdr Paul Rowland.

The eight Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) students spent more than three weeks on an adventurous training expedition to Costa Rica, accompanied by instructors.

The trip was split into three phases; a four-day self-supported trek through rainforest in Corcovado National Park; a four-day ascent of Cerro Chirripo, at 3,820m the highest peak in Central America; and two weeks kayaking and rafting on the white-water rivers of the central highlands.

Designed to develop leadership, teamwork and technical kayaking skills in a challenging environment, the expedition was deemed an unqualified success.

"The Corcovado peninsula, consisting of some of the remotest lowland wet forest in the country, provided a challenging environment, especially as the team had to acclimatise whilst trekking in the hot and humid climate," said Lt Cdr Rowland.

However, the excellent trails and Ranger Posts ensured that although arduous, the hazards remained relatively benign.

"Wet boots and singing frogs all through the night proved the most tiring agents, and the mosquitoes proved as good as the best Highland midges at getting into the tent at night."

An outstanding range of wildlife, from poisonous snakes and frogs to brilliantly-coloured butterflies and birds, was seen.

The trek up Cerro Chirripo was daunting, but although the view was restricted by low cloud, a walk through unspoiled cloud forest was a rare pleasure.

The team did their bit for the environment by carrying an extra 2kg of rubbish, each from the ranger post near the summit.

After a short rest, it was on to the final phase – and a near-perfect campsite amongst palm trees on a deserted sandy beach from which to prepare the equipment.

Using local guides and bus drivers – gave the team the chance to get to know the country as they got down to the business of kayaking.

All the young officers were intermediate paddlers, having been prepared on the rivers of Wales and Devon, and over the course of ten days they honed their skills on seven rivers.

Careful planning was required to avoid the regular mid-afternoon flash floods which are common in the rainy season.

Gradually tackling more challenging stretches of water, the team ended up on the Rio Pacuare, which ranks as one of the top rivers in Central America.

It took two days to cover a 28km section, hidden deep in steep valleys through impenetrable jungle.

There are more than 35 named rapids, most ending in deep, slow-moving pools which were useful for picking out the odd swimmer.

Six went down on a raft, while the others took the chance to show some fancy moves on awesome surfing waves, while side canyons and waterfalls – ideal for sliding down – were explored, giving a magical feel to the end of the trip.

The trip was supported by DNPTS, HQ 5 Div, the RN and RM Sports Lottery and the Sailors and Fleet Amenities Fund, while personal contributions were in the order of £600 each.

A full report of the expedition can be seen on the Navy News website at www.navynews.co.uk

■ For details of BRNC, see the link from the RN website.

BRNC students hit their target

THE YOUNG guns of Dartmouth overcame an experienced HMS Heron XV to win the Lambs Navy Rugby Cup for the first time.

The students from Britannia Royal Naval College triumphed in a keenly-fought and exciting game which featured fine running rugby.

The team from Yeovilton started well, spreading the ball wide in a series of attacks which stretched the Dartmouth defence and culminated in an early converted try.

BRNC gained clean ball as the half progressed, but despite the best efforts of Ligale and Ussher, could not convert possession into points as raking kicks from Heron kept them pinned back.

The students' defence held firm under waves of pressure, with only an exchange of penalties adding to the scores until the stroke of half-time, when a clearance kick was charged down and Heron went in 17-3 ahead.

But BRNC went on to the attack straight from the restart, putting themselves back in the game with an early try.

It was the Dartmouth team which was now handing out the punishment, with the forward push led by Grange, Redwin and Jerrold, and they reeled back the margin until, with just ten minutes remaining, BRNC were two scores ahead.

As Heron tried to reply, ferocious defence blocked them out, and the game finished 31-17 to BRNC.

The result was the culmination of four months effort by the BRNC squad, who had stated the Navy Cup as being one of their targets.

Successful rugby has been matched by an efficient back-room set-up, aiming to provide development players for the RN squad and motivated sportsmen for the Fleet.

High-level matches, including fixtures against Sandhurst, Cranwell, the French naval academy and West Point in the United States, as well as tours to French and the US, have helped give the squad a winning edge – and with another tour coming up, and support from the Sports Lottery/Control Board, they are planning great things again this year.



● View from the cockpit and (inset) one of the frogs which lived in the expedition HQ toilets.

that lived under the rim.

Several highly venomous brown snakes were also caught in the hangar area!

During a bad period of weather, when flying was not possible, John and Kev visited Sydney, a highlight being a walk on the Harbour Bridge.

John and Kev were supported by the Sports Lottery, Royal Naval Gliding and Soaring Association (RNGSA), HMS Collingwood, DNR and the RN Photo Section, RAF Cosford.

For information on RN gliding, contact WOWEA John Bradbury at HMS Collingwood Ext 2656.

As Royal Marines pull out of Kabul, the Navy stays –

On watch for Al Qaeda in Arabian Sea

AS ROYAL Marines of 40 Cdo are withdrawn from Kabul, the Royal Navy remains on watch for Al Qaeda terrorists on the run across the Arabian Sea

In a statement to the House of Commons, Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon spoke of the rapid progress that had been made in the establishment of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which is already patrolling the streets of the Afghan capital.

As lead nation, the UK has been responsible for assembling the force, which he emphasised is there at the invitation of the Afghan Interim Administration under the auspices of a Military Technical Agreement signed on January 4.

Under the terms of the agreement, the ISAF will operate only in Kabul, and British troops have been on patrol since the end of last year, while French colleagues joined them in mid-January. Mr Hoon added that "these patrols have been extremely well received by the people of Kabul."

At a planning conference just before Christmas, 21 nations offered forces for ISAF, many of the offers being of infantry – but the particular requirements of the job meant specialist elements needed to be included.

"We had to construct a balanced and capable force able to get into Afghanistan quickly, support itself and do its job," said Mr Hoon.

"The ISAF needs logistics support. It needs Explosive Ordnance Disposal troops. It needs signallers. It needs engineers. It needs medical units. It needs helicopters. And, given that it will deploy and be supplied by air, it needs air transport."

Mr Hoon said he expected the force to be around 5,000 strong, with 18 countries contributing in total – the UK, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.

The nature of the countries' involvement varies – the Austrians, Danes and Dutch are deploying forces as part of a German-led multinational infantry battlegroup; New Zealand and Turkey are providing HQ staff and support troops; Norway is providing bomb disposal teams and Romania has offered air transport and military police.

Mr Hoon said the UK will lead the force for three months only, and the country's total contribution will be around 1,800 strong. In addition, a short-term deployment of 300 Army and RAF personnel will help repair and operate Kabul International Airport, which will resupply the ISAF.

Turkey has already expressed an interest in taking over from Britain in three months time, when "we would expect to see a significant reduction in the number of British troops deployed," said Mr Hoon. The ISAF is expected to reach peak strength in the middle of this month.

"We are now withdrawing the elements of 40 Cdo Royal Marines who have helped secure Bagram Airstrip," Mr Hoon added.

But the Navy still has a job to

do. The Royal Air Force is still flying reconnaissance and air-to-air refuelling sorties," said Mr Hoon.

"The Royal Navy is playing an important role in the coalition maritime force in the region, and is patrolling in the Arabian Sea to prevent those with links to the Al Qaeda network escaping from the region. I pay tribute to the work they are doing."

Mr Hoon also referred to the humanitarian mission which has been stepped up – the World Food Programme sent 116,000 metric tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan in December – against a target of 100,000 tonnes, the highest monthly distribution figure to date.

Welcoming home Bravo Coy, 40 Cdo from Afghanistan, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Nigel Essenhigh said: "They have been in the vanguard of the UK's support of the international coalition's 'war on terrorism' and have played a vital and significant part in ongoing operations."

"In particular, their role in preparing the way for ISAF has been of the utmost importance and has resulted in its smooth and efficient deployment. I must also thank those families and loved ones who have similarly had their lives so disrupted by the events of September 11."



● **LIFE SAVERS:** With LSAT Sean Chipman at HMAS Albatross are (L-R) Lt Peter Wynter, RAN, Lt Cdr Terry Tyack, RN and Lt Grant Anson, RAN.

Picture – LSPH Steve Gurnett, HMAS Albatross photographic unit

RN pilot saves four in Sydney bush fires

A ROYAL Navy Sea King pilot, on exchange to the Royal Australian Navy, dumped 1,500 litres of water on a 40ft wall of fire, saving the lives of four firefighters and protecting 20 homes, writes Graham Davis, assistant editor Australian Navy News.

The life saving water drop came during the 21-day 'Black Christmas' bushfire emergency in New South Wales, which saw 150 homes destroyed in 700,000 hectares of bushland.

Some 15,000 firefighters from across Australia and New Zealand were deployed. The RAN committed 300 of its own personnel, scrambling nine helicopters from HMAS Albatross at Nowra, 75 miles south of Sydney.

It was from 817 Sqn there that Lt Cdr Terry Tyack, in command of Sea King 'Shark 20' was called in on water bombing missions around the village of Cudmirrah, south east of Nowra. With him were Lt Peter Wynter, Lt Grant Anson and Lt Karly Pidgeon.

On January 7 four members of the Falls Creek Rural Fire Service had been sent to protect a row of homes from an approaching

bushfire at Cudmirrah.

They were led by Sean Chipman, a leading seaman aircraft technician from Albatross who, like so many sailors living in the region, had joined the local volunteer fire brigade.

"It was 2.30pm and the fire was coming very fast through the bush," Sean said later. "The flames were about 300 metres away. The air was full of sparks and embers. The heat was intense and we were between the fire and the houses. We were concerned for our lives."

"Suddenly a Squirrel helicopter arrived overhead which called in reinforcements. Then a Navy Sea King appeared and dropped the contents of its Bambi bucket on the head of the fire."

The water damped down the worst of the fire allowing ground crews to move forward and extinguish it.

Sean credited the Sea King – "an angel with rotor blades instead of wings" – with saving the four lives and 20 homes, and later took time out to visit 817 Sqn to thank Lt Cdr Tyack and his crew members.

Tristan climbed

SAILORS from HMS Montrose – seen here at speed in the South Atlantic – have achieved what is believed to be a first for a Royal Navy ship's company by climbing to the summit of the volcanic island of Tristan da Cunha.

A team of 13 led by Lt Cdr Keri Harris made the gruelling 6,840ft ascent in six hours (the journey back took three!) two members enjoying a dip in the mirage-like volcanic lake.

The Type 23 frigate has been taking part in Exercise Purple Albatross in the Falkland Islands, a joint exercise with the Army and Royal Air Force. Capt Matt Parr succeeded Capt Tony Johnstone-Burt as her CO while the ship was in South Africa for Christmas.





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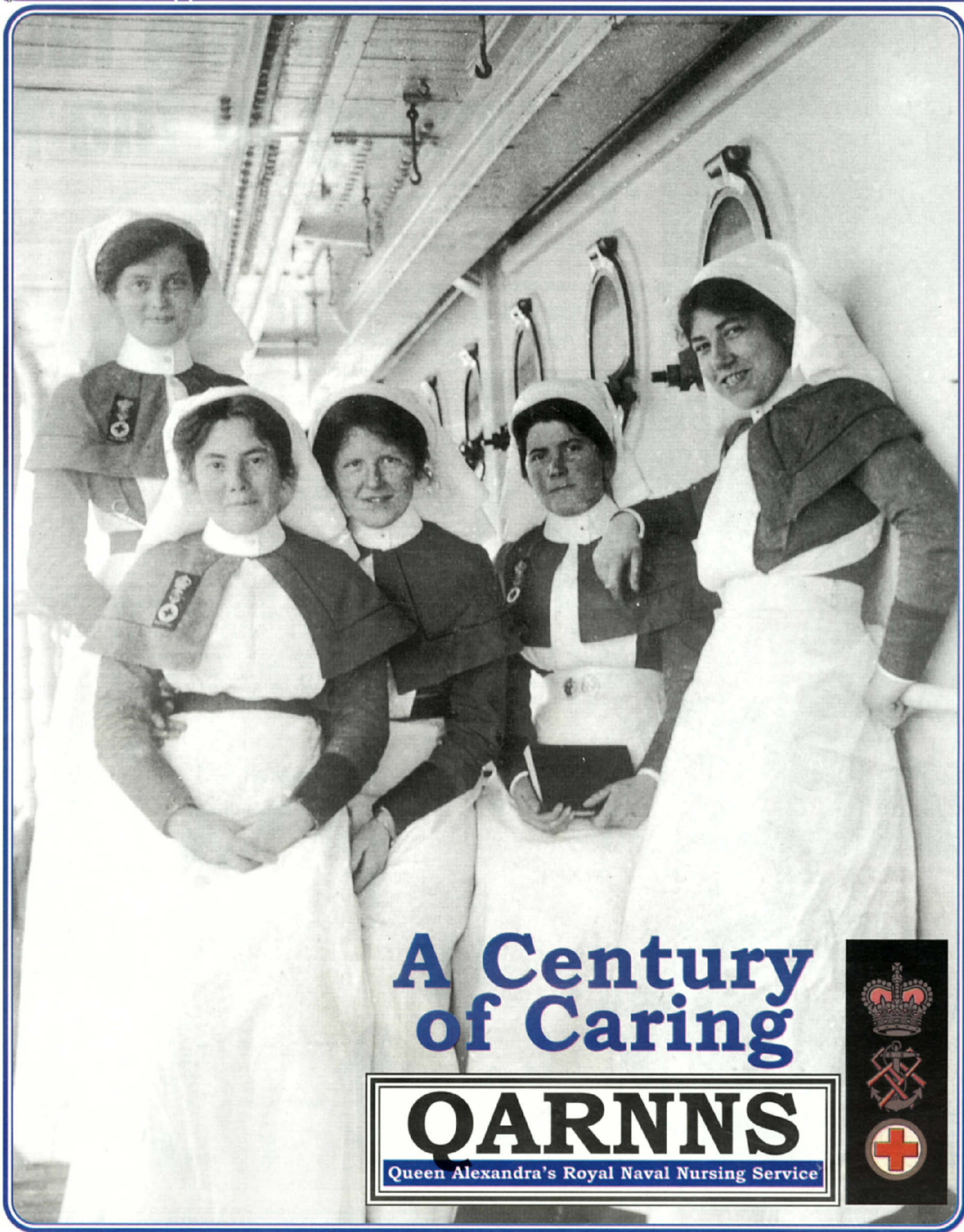
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QARNNS

Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service



The Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service

The changing face of nursing in the Navy



● Mrs Eliza Mackenzie began naval nursing at the naval hospital at Therapia, during the Crimean War.

Throughout its history, the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service has proven itself adaptable, capable and committed to caring for the lives of the men and women of the Royal Navy. Helen Craven gives you a glimpse at the fascinating history of these dedicated nurses.

Naval nursing effectively began in the 1850s, in the Crimean War as men lay dying in atrocious conditions. Earlier nursing duties had been carried out by pensioned sailors and marines, or their widows, and had consisted of scant care and treatment. As Florence Nightingale created a blaze of publicity for the skills of caring

and nursing, Mrs Eliza Mackenzie accompanied by her husband, a Protestant minister, headed to a naval hospital at Therapia on the Bosphorus to provide care to Service personnel.

Eliza had to prove to a doubting Admiralty that she could handle the difficulties and horrors of nursing in this grimy, tearstained war. She stood in the operating theatre of the Middlesex Hospital as a young man's leg was amputated, without anaesthetic – she stood there and watched to prove that she could.

Eliza and her team had to deal with gunshot wounds and infectious diseases, but nursing at this stage was really a matter of basic hygiene and nutrition – keeping the men clean and well-fed long enough to allow their bodies to recover.

But Eliza was conscious throughout that she was setting a precedent that could change the future of care in the Navy.

The Admiralty decided that the experiment with Eliza Mackenzie had proved a success. So naval nursing continued with the first naval sisters joining Haslar and Plymouth hospitals in 1884.

Patient care was carried out correctly and on time, ward cleanliness improved, and subtly but significantly, the language and attitude of the patients and attendants changed. And so the presence of nursing Sisters extended to Chatham.

In fact, the first female personnel went to sea on active service in 1897, when two Sisters joined the Hospital Ship Malacca in 1897 for the Benin



Palace for the Queen to approve a little detail.

At one investiture for a Sister at the Palace, the Queen leant forward and took the QARNNS badge from her hand and said: "You have designed this. I do hope you like it."

The badge for QARNNS still contains crossed AAs for Alexandra's monogram combined with the anchor.

As the omens of World War I materialised, the large hospitals in the country were filled with nurses suitable for the armed forces as the QARNNS Sisters were officers, with staff nursing duties provided by the male Sick Berth staff. But these men were needed elsewhere so hospitals filled their vacancies with Voluntary Aid Detachments and Reserves.

VADs were young women who joined up "to do their bit" in the war. One described the experience as "straight from my mother's room to the sluice of a hospital."

World War I also brought the creation of 'Massage Sisters', physiotherapists. Begun in rudimentary massage the branch progressed before the war school of physiotherapy was over by the RN in 1932.

At the end of the war, the contracted wards staff again by Sick Berth staff and

Through the 20s and 30s, and conditions of service QARNNS developed in line with Army and civilian nursing.

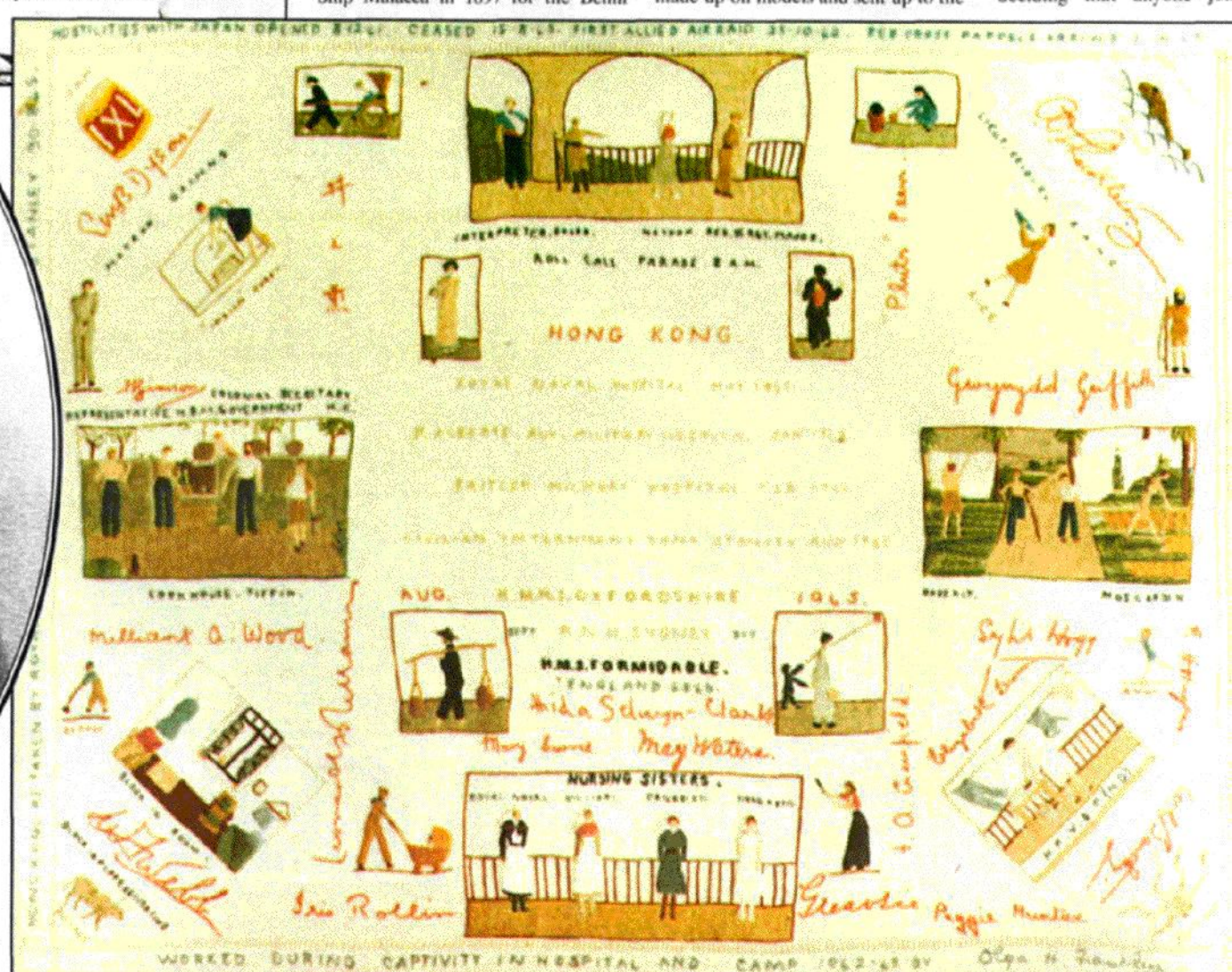
Most significant in this period was the creation of a register of nurses. The Navy followed the Army in deciding that anyone joining



● QARNNS Sisters showing their badges on their tippets, at the Royal Naval Hospital Chatham in 1902.



● Queen Alexandra wished to have the Navy's nursing service under her 'special charge'.



● Olga Franklin was taken from a military hospital to an internment camp after the Japanese captured Hong Kong. In captivity, she recorded her experiences in a tapestry on her nurse's apron.

● Front cover: QARNNS Sisters on board the Hospital Ship Plassy during World War I.

Service celebrates its centenary, 1902-2002

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QARNNS must have completed three years training, and be a registered nurse.

By the 30s, the QARNNS Reserve was re-established as a permanent resource. This meant that in 1939, Reserve Sisters were called up to help in the UK's hospitals while the QARNNS headed overseas.

In time, as the war dragged on, even the Reservists were whisked straight overseas, sometimes without even training or uniforms.

These women served in troop ships, hospital ships, and hospitals around the world.

For three women, the experience of World War II was shaped by their capture by the Japanese at the Royal Naval Hospital in Hong Kong in December 1941.

Miss Olga Franklin was the senior nurse, a Superintending Sister, with two other QARNNS Sisters, Miss Griffith and Miss Rollin. These three with ten other military nurses were taken by the Japanese, who would not recognise their military status, to the Stanley internment camp.

She took with her a tropical diseases nursing textbook, and a set of embroidery silks.

Throughout her time at the camp, she sat and stitched onto her own QARNNS uniform apron in multi-coloured silks pictures of the harsh details of camp life.

The camp was full of women and children, with all their ailments compounded by the lack of food and medicine.

Bartering with the locals provided the only access to these essential supplies, and once items to exchange ran out, then promises and goodwill were the only trade.

On the return of the three QARNNS Sisters from the internment camp, the

QARNNS Benevolent Fund was used to pay the debts run up in this constant struggle to relieve the suffering in the camp.

After the war, nursing life continued. Sisters continued to work in the UK, and returned to places around the world including Malta and Hong Kong.

Military hospitals had ceased to be a male-only preserve, and female staff nurses were needed to provide the hands-on care along with the male Sick Berth Attendants (SBAs).

Initially Wren SBAs were tried, but by the mid-50s the decision was taken to form a QARNNS ratings section, called the Naval Nursing Auxiliaries.

The Admiralty then decided that the Navy could train its own nurses, and took a great step - to set up a Royal Naval School of Nursing.

The Statutory Body for nursing required for all recognised training schools to provide not only qualified nurse teachers, but a patient base with a broader range of conditions than the narrow field provided by young, healthy sailors and marines.

Now the Navy had to provide suitable accommodation and study facilities, and open their military hospitals up fully to a civilian catchment area.

Student and pupil nurse training began in Portsmouth and Plymouth in 1962.

Medical Technicians, the male branch of the RN that provided registered nurses and other health workers,

came into existence in the mid-60s. These men were trained alongside the women at the Royal Naval School of Nursing.

For nurses joining the QARNNS from general hospitals, there were a lot of adjustments to be made.

Even the language changed, and many nurses struggled with the term 'deck' for floor, and 'heads' for toilets. One recalls her initial battle to get to grips with the 24-hour clock: "I think the Sister must have been tearing her hair out because I couldn't work out what 1500 meant."

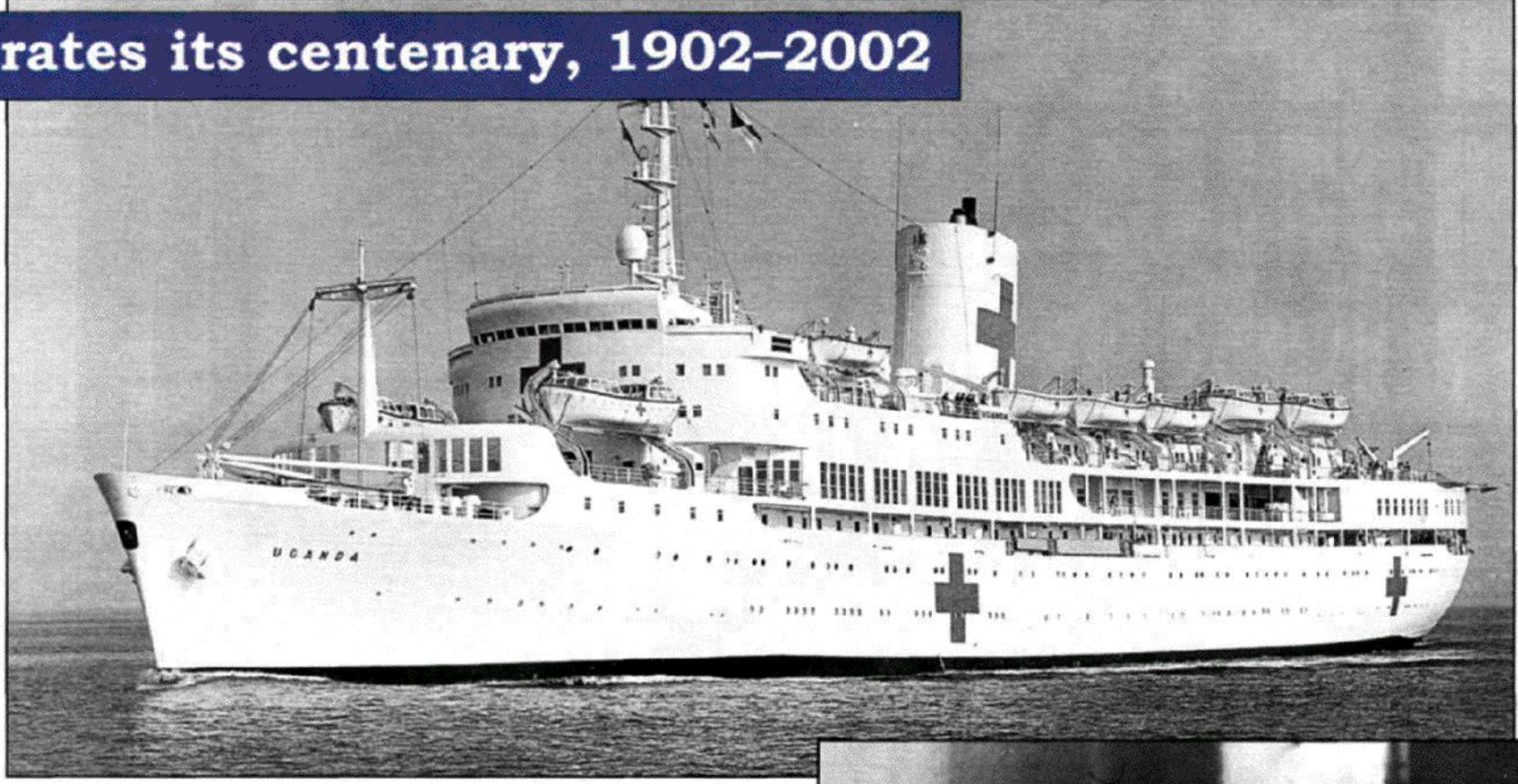
Another former Sister recalls a grand naval tradition which was definitely not part of general hospital practice - the drink ration: "When I used to give out the drugs at about 5 in the evening, in my trolley I had these little trays with little carafes and glasses to give out the appropriate drink - which they thoroughly enjoyed." Ratings received in turn an issue of beer.

In common with working women throughout the decades, the Sisters in the mid-60s had to cope with sexism and ingrained attitudes.

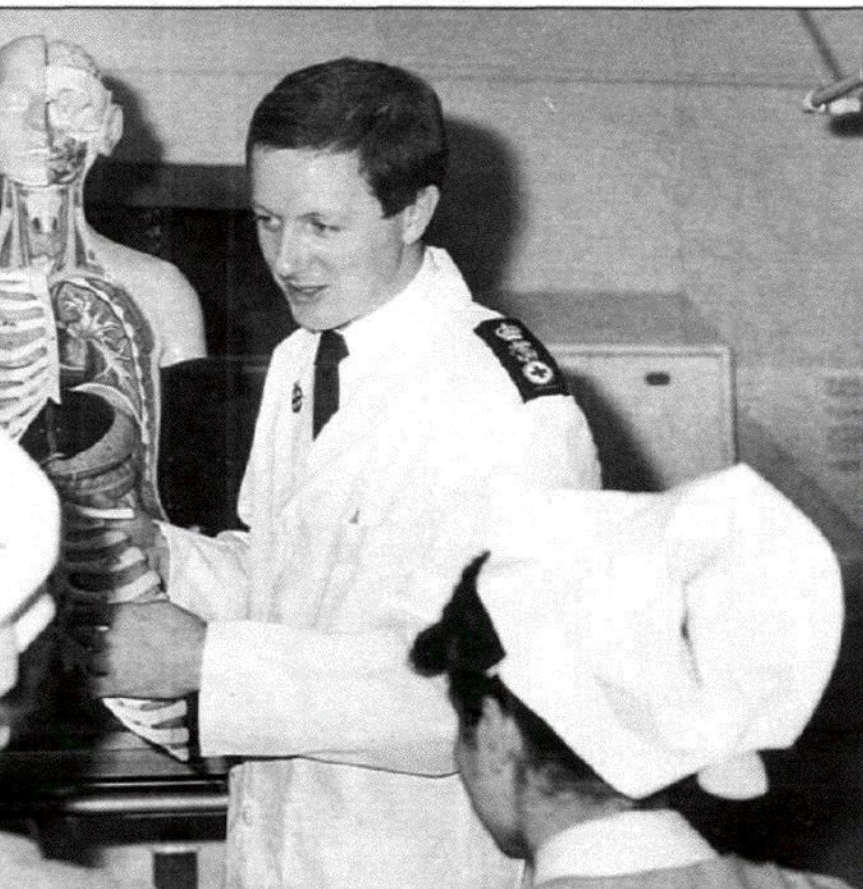
One Sister describes the attitude of a few doctors to the QARNNS nursing staff: "A number seemed to think that the nursing Sisters were there to provide them with tea and coffee and not

■ Turn to next page.

● The Uganda was transformed in just 72 hours in Gibraltar from cruise ship to hospital ship, where QARNNS personnel worked through the Falklands War.



● Nursing duties for QARNNS Sisters were around the world. One sister works in an operating theatre in the hospital at Bighi, Malta, in 1955.



● The male RN qualified nurses unified with the female QARNNS branch in 1983, this photo shows a Senior Nursing Officer instructing probationary student nurses at the Royal Naval School of Nursing in the same year.



● The caption reads: "Ever so much better since you came in, Commander!" Cartoons above and centre page were drawn by Alice Rutledge, a RN VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) in World War II. A file containing her drawings and cartoons was found at a showroom in Plymouth, but no one knows what became of Alice.



● A home visit from a QARNNS Sister in Malta in the 1950s.

much more, but any sister worth her salt faced with that situation soon ensured that it didn't happen again."

Of course, it wasn't just the doctors who had to be set straight. The 60s also brought the arrival of the micro miniskirt: "If you had a really young Sister join whose dress was perhaps a little over the top, she would be taken aside by one of the older people and reminded that she was a nursing officer as well as a young person. And that sometimes one took precedence over the other."

In 1977, all QARNNS personnel came under the Naval Discipline Act; effectively up to that point they had been civilians attached to the RN.

One Sister's opinion of this technical distinction is typical of many: "I joined in 1967, and it didn't occur to me that I wasn't legally part of the Navy. As far as I was concerned I had definitely joined the Navy."

The next major event for the Service after the Korean War was the Falklands War in 1982. The teaching staff at the Royal Naval Hospital Haslar had to move fast to cobble together a syllabus of teaching for the nurses and medical staff heading out to the South Atlantic.

After two days of intensive training, the medical teams set off for war.

The nurses who headed off to the Falklands were lacking basic kit for operational conditions. An emergency dash produced Marks and Spencers trousers and Dental Wrens white tunics.

But the trousers contained man-made fibres, completely unsuitable for the hazards of shipboard life. Quickly the nurses reverted to No.8 blues, the standard working rig for sailors.

One advantage of the long journey south was that it provided ample opportunity for further training and drills. A number of the teaching staff made up the surgical and nursing teams, and all expertise was passed on and shared.

two ratings with burns from HMS Sheffield: "They talked a lot about little presents and things they had bought to bring back to their wives and children that had been lost."

"It was quite poignant to hear them talking about things that really were quite simple little things – but they were very upset about that."

Nurses had to decide their priorities in patient care, and improvise to cover missing equipment: "One thing we had not got was weights [for traction], so we filled plastic lemonade bottles with water."

After the Falklands QARNNS personnel took every opportunity to exercise and train nurses in their

training ship, RFA Argus, had been filled with a "portacabin hospital". And the medics set off once again to war.

RFA Argus spent more time in the frontline of the Gulf Conflict than any other British ship, ensuring that whatever happened, all personnel were within close range of a modern hospital facility.

Argus has only just finished a major refit in 2001, and now contains a complete hospital on three decks. QARNNS nurses and Naval Medical Branch personnel were involved in the planning from the beginning, ensuring that Argus now provides the best hospital environment for the restricted conditions.

In September 1995, QARNNS took naval rank with gold braid and badges on both arms, but with the crossed AAs motif worn on both sleeves or as a badge.

Ultimately in April 2000 the QARNNS became part of the Royal Navy as a discrete nursing service, closely aligned to the mainstream of the RN, but with some differences due to its nursing function.

The QARNNS, along with the medical branches of all three Services, had gone through a serious review in the mid-90s, and the numbers in the Service were significantly reduced while collaboration between the Services grew.

Now the Royal Navy has an increasing humanitarian role across the world, with an accompanying need for medical support.

The Service is growing again in response to this need, providing effective and excellent nursing care to Service personnel and civilians in the UK and around the world, in times of peace and conflict.

The men and women of the QARNNS will continue to adapt and face with bravery the future for the Royal Navy.



● A Sister tutor instructs nurses and Sick Berth staff in the 1960s at Haslar.

This travelling time was particularly useful for the chance to exercise with the Royal Marines bandsmen, musicians whose specific operational role was to act as stretcher bearers.

These Marines had a difficult task, carrying patients through doors, along corridors and up stairs in difficult sea conditions and traumatic times.

A QARNNS Sister who served in the Falklands recalls: "They were absolutely wonderful, marvelous."

For the first time the hospital ship's role changed during this South Atlantic conflict. Up to then hospital ships were primarily the carriers of the wounded and nursing generally consisted of making the patients comfortable, redoing their dressings, and feeding and watering them, with some necessary emergency treatment.

In the Falklands, the surgical teams performed not only this initial surgery, but secondary surgery.

The nurses treated casualties brought from field hospitals, or even just lifted from the battlefield. Argentinians were treated alongside the British, and all received equal care and attention.

The Sister recalls treating her first patients from the Falklands,

war role, along with the Surgical Support Teams and the Royal Marines, in a ship environment.

It wasn't until 1983 that the two naval nursing branches, male and female, were unified.

This gave the male Medical Technicians, a previously unavailable option to advance from nurse

to Nursing Officer – a new title that replaced Sister in these men-friendly times.

When the problems flared up in the Gulf, no British hospital ship was sent to the front. There was no suitable British vessel in UK waters; and a dedicated hospital ship was required to conform to strict regulations in terms of location and communications.

Within a fortnight, the hangar of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary aviation



● Below left: Youngsters at HMS Ganges don't seem to be performing too well at a training session.

● Miss K'Eogh, one of the first women to serve at sea with the Royal Navy in 1897.

With thanks to: Captain Claire Taylor and the QARNNS Archive for material and photographs; The Oral History Collection of the Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth.



**QARNNS
centenary
1902-2002**



Centenary events:

- October 2001 – a tree planting in the Garden of Remembrance at Haslar Hospital.
- May 8 – Florence Nightingale Foundation ceremony at Westminster Abbey. All three Services take part, and the three Matrons-in-Chief escort the Book of Remembrance for all British nurses who have died in conflict; 2002 will have a special significance for the QARNNS.
- May 9 – Reception at Goldsmith's Hall in London for serving and retired QARNNS personnel.
- June 17 – Exhibition at Netley Museum in Southampton to celebrate QARNNS and the Army's nursing corps, QARANC.
- July – QARNNS 2002 Sailing Expedition: Portsmouth, Lisbon, Gibraltar using BT Challenger Yacht.
- September 7 – Dedication of chapel in Portsmouth cathedral. Commissioned artwork and plaque with motif.

Commemorations:

- Book: 'Nursing in the Senior Service' by Claire Taylor, published in January 2002.
- Article: 'Light before Dawn: Naval Nursing and Medical Care during the Crimean War' by Richard Huntsman, Mary Bruin, Deborah Holtum. Published in the Spring 02 edition of the *Journal of the Royal Naval Medical Service* produced at the Institute of Naval Medicine.
- Notelets, postcards and coasters to commemorate the centenary.
- For details, contact the QARNNS Archive, Institute of Naval Medicine, Gosport, PO12 2DL.
- RN Philatelic Society is producing a commemorative cover to mark the centenary in November.
- Permanent exhibit at Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth.

Further details:

- For recruitment information: www.rnjobs.co.uk.
- QARNNS Archive, INM, Gosport, PO12 2DL.
- QARNNS Assn (Officers), Secretary, 2 Longwater Drive, Gosport, PO12 2UP. www.qarnnsassociation.co.uk.
- QARNNS Assn (Ratings), Secretary, 12 Dell Close, Widley, Waterlooville, PO7 5AY. www.qarnnsratings.cwc.net.



● A Sister on a ward in Wentworth Hospital in Durban, South Africa, 1944.